

XVIII
SERMONS
O N

Several Occasions :

PARTICULARLY

Of the Great Duty of Universal
Love and Charity.

Of the Government of Passion.
Discourses upon Occasion of the
PLAGUE.

Of St. PETER being the Rock
on which CHRIST built his
Church.

Of the Faith of ABRAHAM.

Of CHRIST being the Bread of
Life.

Of the Original of Sin and Mi-
sery.

Of Election and Reprobation,
being a Paraphrase on Rom.
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The PRESENT Life a State of
PROBATION in order to a
Future Life.

That CHRIST's Admonitions to
his Apostles, belong universally
to all Christians.

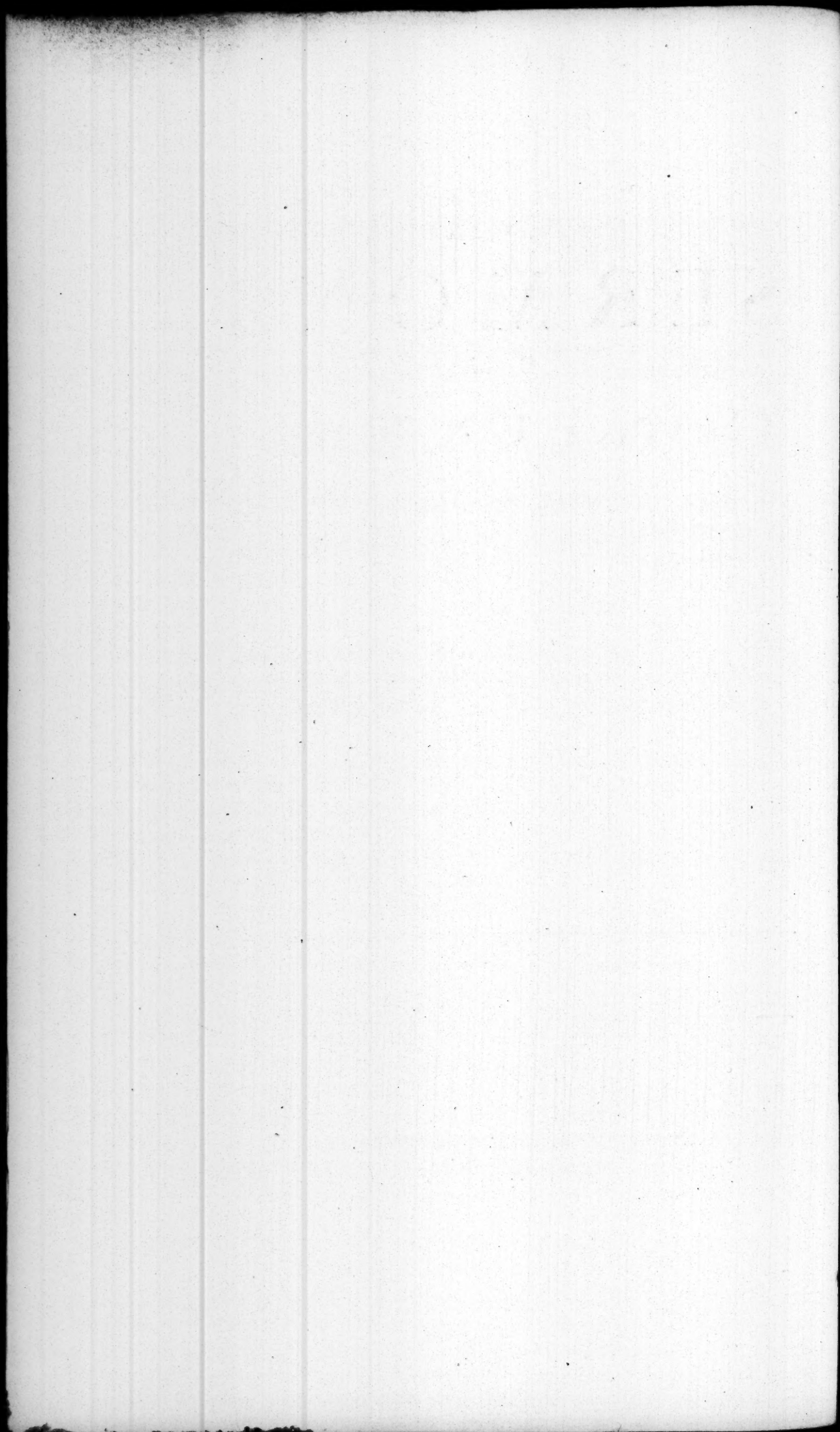
By ^KSAMUEL CLARKE, D.D. late Rector of
St. James's Westminster.

The THIRD EDITION.

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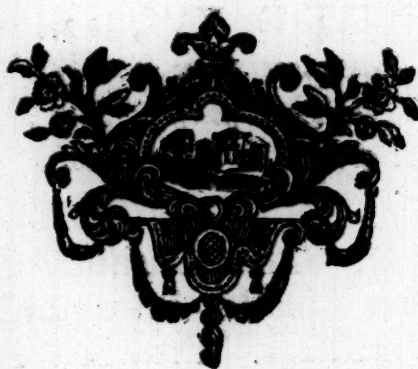
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SERM.

*The Great Duty of Universal LOVE
and CHARITY.*

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

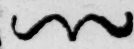
AT

St. JAMES's CHAPEL,
On Sunday Decemb. the 30th, 1705.

Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTIES Special Command.

I JOHN IV. 21.

*And this Commandment have we from him,
that he who loveth God, love his Brother
also.*

THE true End and Design of Serm. I.
Religion, is manifestly this; 
to make Men wiser and bet-
ter; to improve, exalt, and
perfect their Nature; to teach them to
B obey

Serm. I. obey and love and imitate God; to cause them to extend their Love and Goodness and Charity to all their Fellow-Creatures, each in their several Stations, and according to the Measure of their several Abilities; in like Manner as the universal Goodness of God, extends it self over all his Works through the whole Creation: And to oblige them to govern the Passions of their Mind, with Moderation; and the Appetites of their Body, with Temperance. This is plainly the chief End and Design of true Religion. And whoever acts contrary to all or any of these great Rules, by wilfully dishonouring God, by hating his Brother, or by abusing and corrupting himself; is either a false and hypocritical Professor of the Truth, if he does these Things in Contradiction to the plain Rules, and in Defiance of the Laws of his Religion; or else the Religion which he professes, is itself a false and corrupt Religion, if he does any of these Things in Compliance with the Principles, and by Permission of the Laws thereof. The Religion of the Church of *Rome*, is therefore a false and corrupt Religion; because, as it dishonours *God* by mixing Idolatry with Divine Worship, and gives Men too much Encouragement to corrupt *Themselves* and to indulge their vicious Inclinations and Habits

Habits, by allowing them, through many Superstitious Rights, to reconcile a wicked Life with the Hopes of Heaven; so it *particularly* permits, nay, and requires Men to hate and persecute their *Brethren*. And those whom, for want of the Arguments of Reason and Truth, they are not able to convince and bring over to their Party, they endeavour by all the Ways of Violence and Cruelty to root out and extirpate from among Men: As if the Religion of Christ was intended to divest Men of common Humanity, and the Service and Glory of God could in good earnest be promoted by the Destruction of Mankind. This is one of the greatest Corruptions of an excellent Institution, that can be imagined; when Religion itself, instead of promoting the universal Peace and Happiness and Welfare of Men, is made to authorize such Practices, the Prevention whereof is manifestly the chief and greatest End for which any Religion can reasonably be supposed to have been instituted at all. Particular Persons, under the Profession of the best and purest Religion in the World, may be led away with some Degrees of this Spirit of Errour; through a false Zeal, and a mistaken Judgment; as some of the *Apostles* themselves were for calling for Fire from Heaven upon the

Serm. I. *Samaritans* who refused to entertain our Saviour: But the Christian Religion *it self*, the pure and uncorrupted Doctrine of our Saviour, is entirely opposite to this Spirit; and teaches us nothing but Love and Peace, Meekness and Charity, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; For this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

In the following Discourse upon which Words, I shall endeavour, *First*, to shew briefly the great Obligation, which lies upon all Men in general, considered as Equals, to practise this excellent Duty of Love and Meekness, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. And, *Secondly*, I shall consider some of the principal and most remarkable Variations of this Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances that Men stand in, one towards another.

I. As to the Obligation which lies upon all Men in general, consider'd as Equals, to practise this great Duty of universal Love, Meekness, and Charity; 'tis evident

1st. That, by the Original Order and Constitution of *Nature*, Men are so made
and

framed, that they necessarily want one another's Help and Assistance, for their mutual Support and Preservation in the World. They cannot subsist, at least they cannot enjoy any Comfort of Life, independently on each other; but are manifestly fitted by the very Frame of their Nature, to live in Communities; and Society is absolutely necessary for them; and the Bond of all Society, is mutual Love, Charity and Friendship. Now in this Respect, all Men naturally stand upon the same Level; they have all the same natural Wants and Desires; they are all in the same Need of each other's Assistance, and are equally capable of enjoying the Benefits and Advantages of Society. 'Tis manifest therefore that every Man, as he is a Man, is bound by the Law of his Nature, by common *Humanity*, to look upon himself as a Part or Member of that one universal Body or Community, which is made up of all Mankind; to think himself born and sent into the World on purpose, to promote the publick Good and Welfare of all his Fellow-Creatures; and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only effectual Means to that End, to embrace them all with universal Love, Charity, and Benevolence.

Serm. I. And as all Men are obliged to this, by the necessary *Law and Condition* of their Being, and by all the outward *Circumstances* of the present State, wherein God has placed them; so they are also strongly prompted to it by the *natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, when not corrupted by the Practise of Vice. For by Nature Men are plainly disposed to be kind and friendly, and willing to do good. Nothing is naturally more agreeable and pleasant to the Mind of Man, than being helpful and beneficial one to another. And, did they not suffer Covetousness and Revenge, and other foolish and absurd Passions, unreasonably to over-rule this their natural Disposition; they would universally enjoy the happy Fruits and Effects of it. For even in the present most corrupt State of the World, as far as their Vices will permit, Men still desire to keep up a general Commerce and Communication with each other; they love to encrease their Dependencies, by multiplying Affinities; and to enlarge their Friendships, by mutual good Offices; and to establish Societies, by a Communication of Arts and Labour and Industry. The only possible Means of preserving which Societies in any tolerable and durable Manner, being the Practise of mutual Love and universal Charity and Benevolence;

lence; shows plainly what the Direction Serm. I. and Tendency of uncorrupted Nature is. ~~~~~

No Man therefore can, without transgressing both the plain *Law* of his Being, and also acting contrary to the Reason of his own Mind and the natural *Inclination* of his uncorrupted Affections, do willingly any Hurt or Mischief to any Man: But every one is obliged for the publick Benefit, to endeavour to do good to all, and to love all Men even as himself. And upon what Occasion soever any Misunderstandings or Provocations may happen to arise, he ought immediately to endeavour to appease with Gentleness, rather than exasperate with Retaliations, and put an End to all Differences, as soon as possibly he can. By this Means the World would become as happy, as 'tis possible for Men in this present State of Imperfection to be. And nothing hinders Mankind from arriving actually at this Degree of Happiness, but most *perverse* and most *unreasonable Iniquity*.

For, in order to bring about this great and excellent End, *viz.* universal Love and Friendship, and all the happy Effects and Consequences of it; nothing further is requisite, than that Men do to others in all Respects, what they would reasonably desire that others should in like Circumstances do to them. This is all that

Serm. I. is really meant by loving others as themselves; and thus much they are manifestly obliged to, by the plainest *Equity*, and by the clearest *Reason* in the World. Every Man is desirous, and thinks it highly reasonable, that others should deal with *Him*, according to the Rules of Equity, Humanity and Friendship; that they should be tender of his Life, Estate and Reputation; that in Matters of Commerce, they should treat him with Justice, Fairness and Truth; that in Things wherein he stands in Need of their Assistance, and has good Ground to expect it, they should be willing to relieve him according to their Power; that in case of Ignorance or Mistake, they should be ready to inform him; and, where he has given any Offence, to forgive him upon his Desire of Reconciliation. This every Man thinks reasonable in his *own* Case; and therefore he is undeniably bound to think it reasonable likewise, when ever it be *another Man's* Case to expect the like from *Him*. And if he does not act according to this Judgment; he is manifestly guilty of such Iniquity and Unrighteousness, as nothing but Custom in Wick- edness and the Number of evil Examples could be able to support Men under, and harden them in the Practise of it, against the Shame and Self-condemnation of their
own

Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

9

own Minds. For, what is in it self fit Serm. I.
and right to be done, every Man's own
Conscience plainly tells him; and, when-
soever he gives himself Time seriously to
consider and review his Actions, it accord-
ingly either applauds and commends him,
and affords him great Pleasure and Satis-
faction, from the Sense of his having an-
swered the chief Ends of his Creation, and
complied with the highest Obligations of
his Nature, in having endeavoured to pro-
mote the universal Welfare and Happi-
ness of Mankind, by the Practice of Truth
and Righteousness, Meekness, Goodness
and Charity; or else, on the other Side,
it cannot but secretly reproach and severe-
ly condemn him, for having acted the
contrary Part. Which Judgment of Con-
science, though Men may indeed conceal
from the World, and dissemble their Sense
of the Weight of it upon their own Minds,
in respect of their *own Actions*; yet it al-
ways discovers it self in the Censures they
pass upon the *Actions of others*. For,
how much Wickedness, and Uncharita-
bleness, or Pride and Contentiousness soe-
ver, Men can overlook in *themselves*; yet
there is no Man, but in judging of *others*,
where his own Interest and Passions are
not concerned, will rightly enough di-
stinguish concerning the Characters of Per-
sons, and the true Value of Mens Actions;
will

Serm. I. will give just Applause and Commendation to Men of meek and peaceable and quiet Spirits, Lovers of Mankind, such as delight to do good, and to make all about them as easy and happy as they can; and, on the contrary, will freely condemn the Promoters of Hatred, Animosity, and Contention. All which plainly shows, both what the Law of our Nature, and what the original Inclinations of our Affections are, when not corrupted with the Practice of Vice.

2. As all Men are obliged thus by the necessary *Circumstances and Condition* of their Being, and also by the *original and natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, to love and to do Good to each other, according to their several Powers and Abilities: So they are still further and more strictly obliged to the Practice of the same Duty, in *Imitation* of the *Nature*, and in *Obedience* to the *Will and Law* of 1 Joh. iv. 8. *God. God himself is Love*, as the Apostle styles him; an infinite and inexhaustible Fountain of never-failing Goodness: Who, being infinitely and eternally happy in the Injoyment of his own unspeakable Perfections, could have no other Motive to create Things at first, but only that he might communicate his Goodness and Happiness to his Creatures; and continues to preserve them for no other Reason,

Reason, but that he may still continue to do good to them. *He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust:* Serm. I.
Matth. v.
45.

Giving us from Heaven fruitful Seasons, and filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness. Acts xiv.
17.

Now for the same Reason that God does *himself* continually delight in doing Good, and seems always to take especial Pleasure in describing himself by that particular Attribute of Love and Goodness; for the same Reason it must necessarily be his Will, that all reasonable Creatures should imitate him in that excellent Perfection; and by the Practise of mutual Love and Charity, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness. God cannot but be pleased with such, who endeavour to conform themselves to the Likeness of his Divine Nature, and make it their Business, according to the Extent of their Power, and the Measure of their several Abilities, to promote the Welfare and Happiness of all their Fellow-creatures; in like Manner as the Love and Goodness and Mercy of God extends it self universally over all his Works through the whole Creation. He has given us noble Powers and Faculties on Purpose, to enable us to imitate him in the Exercise of these excellent Attributes. He has en-
dued

Serm. I. dued us with Reason and Understanding

for that very End, that we might be able to discern between Good and Evil, and learn to choose the one and avoid the other. He has implanted in our Minds such Affections and Dispositions, as naturally incline us to be *kind* and *friendly* and *charitable* one towards another. He has so framed and constituted our Nature, and so ordered the Circumstances of our present State, as to make Society and Friendship necessary to the Support and Comfort of Life; on Purpose that Men might be continually exercised in the Practice of these divine Virtues. He has interwoven the Interests of Men, and made the Happiness of every particular Person depend upon the Welfare of the Publick; that each one, from the Sense of his own Wants and Exigencies, might see the Reasonableness and Necessity of making it his principal Business to do good to others. In fine; he has given us no other Way of expressing so acceptably our Love and Gratitude to himself, whom we *have*

Joh. iv. 21. *not seen*; as by loving and doing good to our Brethren, whom *we have seen*. For
 1 Joh. iv. *no Man hath seen God at any Time*; but
 12 and 13. *if we love one another, hereby we know that God, tho' invisible, yet really dwelleth in us, and that his Love is perfected in us, and that we dwell in him, and he in us, because*

cause we are Imitators of his Nature and Serm. I. Partakers of his Spirit. And thus much is clear even from the bare Light of Nature it self.

But then, 3dly, The *Christian* Religion carries our Obligation to the Practice of this excellent Duty, still much higher. We are *Now* obliged to love and to do good to one another, not only by the Ties of common Humanity, as we are Men, and Partakers of the same common Nature; but we are further to look upon our selves as *Brethren* in a more peculiar and eminent Manner, being all the Children of God in Christ, all Members of the same Body, all Partakers of the same Spirit, all Heirs of the same blessed Hope of Immortality. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in you all. Wherefore I beseech you, saith the Apostle, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

Again: We Christians, have not only the *Example* of God's Love and Goodness in general proposed to our Imitation, as these excellent Attributes of the Divine Nature

Serm. I. Nature are made known to us by right
 ~ Reason, and by the Light of Nature, and
 by our continual Experience of that good
 Providence which Presides over all, and
 does good to all, and manifests it self dai-
 ly in all the Works of God through the
 whole Creation: But we have moreover
 the *Example* of God's Goodness and lov-
 ing Kindness manifested to us in a more
particular and extraordinary Manner, in
 that singular Instance of the Redemption
 of Mankind by the Death of his Son: Of
 which exceeding great and undeserved
 Mercy, we being all partakers, and hav-
 ing all our Hopes of Happiness founded
 upon it, are consequently under the
 strongest Obligation possible, to be in our
 Proportion kind and merciful and chari-
 table to our *Brethren*, as God has been
 infinitely good and merciful to *Us*. This
 Argument is strongly urged by the Apo-
 stle St. Paul, Col. iii. 12. *Put on there-
 fore, as the Elect of God, holy and belov-
 ed, bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humble-
 ness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering;
 forbearing one another, and forgiving one
 another, if any Man has a Quarrel against
 any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do
 ye. And above all these Things, put on
 Charity, which is the Bond of Per-
 fection; and let the Peace of God rule in
 your*

your Hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body. Serm. I.

Lastly; as we are Christians, we are obliged to love and to do good to each other; not only by our knowing *in general*, from the Consideration of the Divine Nature and Attributes, that it must needs be agreeable to the Will of God that we should do so; but by having moreover received it, with singular Inforcement, as the *peculiar* Law and Command of our *Saviour*, on which he insists particularly, and seems to recommend it above all others, as the most absolutely necessary and indispensable Qualification of a sincere Christian. *A new Commandment*, saith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another;* Joh. xiii. 34. And he makes it as it were the distinguishing Mark and Badge of his Disciples: *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one towards another.* He himself, whilst he was here upon Earth, *went continually about, doing good*; and in so doing he has set us an Example, wherein he indispensably requires that we should follow his Steps. And accordingly we find the Apostles every where declaring, that universal Love and Charity, *is the End of the Commandment*, the principal Aim and Design

Serm. I. Design of our whole Religion, 1 Tim. i. 5.

~ That he that loveth his Neighbour, hath fulfilled the Law; For that all the Commandments are briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, Rom. xiii. 8. And again; that all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, Gal. v. 14. Insomuch that whosoever wants this excellent Virtue; all his other Pretences of Religion whatsoever, and of Zeal for the Service of God, are declared to be vain and of no Value. If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar, 1 Joh. iv. 20. And St. Paul in like manner: Though I speak, saith he, with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity; I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal; That is, all my Pretences to Religion are false and empty. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity; I am nothing. And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned; and have not Charity; it profiteth me nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. 1. And the Reason why so particular a Stress is laid upon the Practise of this great Duty of univer-

universal Love and Charity, is plain. Sermon I.
 Namely, because it is that Temper and
 Disposition of Mind, which is the high-
 est possible Improvement and Perfection
 of our rational Nature. 'Tis that which
 makes our Souls like unto God, who is
 Goodness itself. 'Tis that which, in the
 Nature of the thing itself, is of the last
 and utmost Importance, as being natu-
 rally and necessarily the Condition and
 Ground both of our present Happiness
 and of that which is to come. 'Tis a
 Qualification of Mind absolutely necessa-
 ry, to make us capable of the *Sight* of
 God, and of the *Happiness* of Heaven.
 For we must be *like* God, if we will *see*
him as he is: And we must first attain
 that Disposition of Mind, wherein the
 Happiness of Heaven essentially consists;
 if we will hope to be Partakers of that
 Happiness. In a Word; that Frame of
 Mind which inclines us to do good, and
 to take Delight in doing it, is itself the
 Temper and Disposition of Happiness;
 and without this, 'tis no more possible
 for a rational Creature to be made Happy,
 than it is to alter the Nature and Essen-
 ces, the necessary and eternal Reason and
 Proportion of Things. This is the plain
 and necessary Reason, why Love and
 Charity and Goodness, are constantly pre-
 ferred before all other Virtues; as being
 C the

Serm. I. the ultimate End and Design of Religion,
 ~~~~~ and themselves a principal and necessary  
 Ingredient of the Joys of Heaven. Almost  
 all *other* Virtues, or Gifts and Excellen-  
 cies whatsoever, are but as Means to *this*  
 End; and to be *done away when that*  
*which is perfect is come.* *Hope*, is but  
 the present Expectation, and *Faith* the  
 firm Belief of those Things which shall  
 be made manifest hereafter. And when  
 that comes to pass, then these Virtues, and  
 all other Gifts which are in Order to  
 these, must necessarily and of Course  
 cease. *Whether there be Prophecies, they*  
*shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they*  
*shall cease; whether there be Knowledge,*  
*it shall vanish away.* But *Charity* and  
*Goodness never fail.* These are Dispo-  
 sitions of Mind which are begun in the  
*Virtues of this* Life, and compleated in  
 the *Glory of the next*; which will grow  
 up with the Improvements of our Know-  
 ledge and Virtue here, to a perfect and  
 unspeakable Happiness in the Enjoyments  
 of the World to come.

1 Cor. xiii.  
8.

And now, could any Man, who se-  
 ricutly considered these Things, and was  
 unacquainted with the Practise of the  
 World, believe it possible, that Men, who  
 professed that holy Religion which so  
 plainly teaches this Doctrine of Peace,  
 should yet so directly contrary to the  
 whole

whole End and Design of the Religion of Serm. I.  
 Christ, (as is too plainly the Practise of  
 the chief Propagators of the *Romish* Faith)  
 indulge their Passions, their Pride, their  
 Covetousness, their Ambition so far, as  
 not only to be the Cause of Envyings,  
 Strifes and Contentions, but even to make  
*Wars and Fightings* necessary among  
 Christians? to the infinite Scandal of our Jam. iv. 1.  
 most holy Religion, in the Sight of *Jews*  
 and *Turks* and *Pagans*; among whom *the*  
*Name of God is blasphemed through Us, as*  
*it is written; Rom. ii. 24.* Could such  
 a one believe it possible, if it was not too  
 manifest in Experience; that Men who  
 call themselves Christians, should oppress  
 and *bite and devour one another*, and not  
 be afraid of the Apostles threatning, that  
 they should *be consumed one of another?*  
 And is it not still *much more* absurd, that Gal. v. 15.  
 Religion *it self*, that the Religion of  
 Christ, the Religion of Peace and Love,  
 which was intended to reconcile Men to  
 God and to each other, should it self be  
 made the Occasion of Hatred, Animosi-  
 ties and Contentions; nay, of the great-  
 est Oppressions and most inhumane Cru-  
 elties? In a Word, that Pretences of Re-  
 ligion *it self*, should produce in Men that  
 Spirit, for the preventing whereof all Re-  
 ligion was principally and ultimately in-  
 tended? I shall conclude this Head with

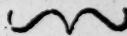


Serm. I. those remarkable Words of the Apostle  
 ~~~~~ St. James, Jam. iii. 13. *Who is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter Envyings and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, &c.*

II. It remains that I proceed in the 2d Place to consider briefly some of the principal *Variations* of this great Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances which Men stand in one towards another.

And here the Practise of this Duty is *diversified* as many Ways, as there are different Stations, or different Circumstances and Conditions of Men in the World. I shall only mention these following; from which all the rest may easily be deduced.

1st. What this great Duty of Love and Charity obliges us to, in respect of our Behaviour

Behaviour towards *Superiours and Infe-* Serm. I.
riours. 

2dly. How it obliges us to behave our
selves towards our *Enemies*, or those who
have done us any particular Injury. And

3dly. How it obliges good Men to be-
have themselves towards those, who are
either *neglecters or despisers of Religion*
in general, or so unhapy as to be involv-
ed in some particular *great and pernicious*
Errors.

1st. In respect of our Behaviour to-
wards *Superiours*; the Duty of *universal*
Love is to shew forth it self in hearty,
willing and cheerful Obedience to the
Commands of those whom God has set
over us: In delighting to promote their
Honour, and to increase amongst Men
that Duty and Respect, which is due to
Authority: In thinking them that *rule*
well, worthy of double Honour: And (be-
cause all Government is a Burden, as well
as an Honour; therefore) this Duty par-
ticularly obliges us to endeavour to make
that Burden as light and easy as we can,
by a careful and diligent and conscienti-
ous Discharge of our several Duties, each
in our respective Stations; so as unani-
mously to promote all the Ends and De-
signs of good Government, the Execution of
wise and wholesome Laws, and the Peace
and Prosperity of the Publick.

Serm. I. In respect of our Behaviour towards
 ~~~~~ *Inferiors*; the Duty of Christian Love,  
 is to shew forth it self in just and righteous  
 and merciful Dealings; in readily relieving  
 the Necessities of those that want; in delivering  
 and vindicating the Oppressed; in instructing  
 the Ignorant and those that are in Error; in  
 reprovng the Wicked, and, by good Example as  
 well as good Advice, perswading and bringing  
 them to a better Mind: In a Word, doing  
 all the Good we can, both to the Souls and  
 Bodies of Men; in imitating of our Saviour,  
*who went about doing good.*

Now by how much the greater any Man's  
 Power or Riches, Interest or Authority is, and  
 by how much the higher his Station is in the  
 World; by so much the greater is his Power  
 of doing good, and by so much the more  
 glorious is his exercising and imploying his  
 Power to that excellent and noble End. And  
 here is the true and immortal Glory of wise  
 and good Princes, that as they represent  
 God in the Exercise of Power and Authority  
 in the World, so they resemble him also in  
 the Application of that Power to serve the  
 Ends of Virtue and Goodness in promoting  
 the publick Happiness of Mankind. Power is  
 not desirable for its own Sake, any more than  
 Wisdom



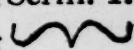
Wisdom and Knowledge; but only for *Serm. I.*  
the Sake of that greater good, which it  
enables Men to do in the World. And  
to abuse Power to the enslaving and de-  
stroying of Mankind, and to the serving  
such Purposes, the preventing whereof is  
indeed the only good Reason for which  
Power is truly desirable; is the greatest  
Weakness and Absurdity in the World.  
To employ great Power and Riches in con-  
quering and subduing many Nations, in  
causelessly oppressing Multitudes of People,  
and subverting the common Rights and Li-  
berties of Men; is the greatest Folly, as  
well as the greatest Wickedness, imagi-  
nable: And nothing can be more weak  
and contrary to Reason, than to call that  
Ambition by the Name of Glory and  
Greatness, which is really the most in-  
glorious and the most dishonourable  
Thing in Nature. God is the supreme  
Governor of the World, possessed entire-  
ly of absolute and uncontrollable Power:  
Yet he makes Use of that Power to no o-  
ther End, but to preserve and support  
and do good to all his Creatures, ac-  
cording to their several Natures and Ca-  
pacities. *He is good, and does good;* and  
esteems Goodness his greatest Glory and  
Perfection, the Title which he most de-  
lights to be described by. True Great-  
ness therefore, is to imitate God in this



Serm. I. most glorious Perfection of Goodness.

And those whom he has endued with Power and Authority to represent him on Earth, are then most truly and illustriously his Vice-gerents, when they look upon a large Extent of Power, to be only a greater Compass of doing good; when they imitate God, in being Lovers and Preservers of Mankind, and making Government a Protection and Security to all that live under it. And if beyond this, they be still further enabled to restrain the Fury of Oppressors abroad, and to be Vindicators of the common Rights and Liberties of Nations; this is still a higher Degree of true Honour and Greatness, and a becoming really the Praise and Glory of the whole Earth. How unspeakably happy is that People, on whom God has vouchsafed to bestow so inestimable a Blessing! And how thankful ought we to be, that the Description of such Felicity, is at this Time the exact Description of our own Case!

2dly. In Respect of our Behaviour towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury; the Duty of universal Love and Charity, is to shew forth itself in a willing and ready Disposition to forgive them upon their Repentance and desire of Reconciliation. *If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and*

and if he repent, forgive him: And *Serm. I.*  
 if he trespass against thee seven Times   
 in a Day, and seven times in a Day  
 turn again to thee, saying, I repent;  
 thou shalt forgive him, Luk. xvii. 3. This,  
 we Christians are in a particular Manner  
 obliged to, by the Example of God's much  
 greater Goodness and Compassion towards  
 Us. Since God has forgiven us all, our  
*ten thousand Talents*; nothing can be  
 more reasonable in the Nature of the  
 Thing itself, than that we should be  
 moved by that Example, to forgive one  
 another *freely our hundred Pence*; and to  
 have Compassion each on our fellow-ser-  
 vants, as God has had Pity on Us.  
 But besides the Reasonableness of the  
 Thing itself, God has moreover made  
 it the exprefs Condition of our own  
 enjoying the Benefit of *His* gracious Par-  
 don: For, *so likewise*, saith our Saviour,  
*shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,*  
*if ye from your Hearts forgive not every*  
*one his Brother their Trespases*, Mat.  
 xviii. 35. And accordingly we are di-  
 rected even in our daily Prayer, to ask  
 Forgiveness at the Hands of God; only  
 upon such Condition, and in such Man-  
 ner, as we forgive one another our Tref-  
 passes. And this is, upon Supposition of  
 our Enemies repenting: But if they do  
 not repent, yet even still we are obliged  
 to



Serm. I. to *love* and *bleſs* them, to *pray* for them, and take all Opportunities of *doing good* to them; after the Example of our heavenly Father, who doth good even to the Evil and the Unthankful. Nevertheless, all that is ſaid upon this Head, is to be underſtood of *private*, not of *the publick* Enemies; againſt whom neither the Laws of Nature nor of Chriſtianity, have provided any other Way of ſecuring our ſelves, than by endeavouring to deprive them of the *Power* of hurting *Us*.

*Laſtly*, in reſpect of the Behaviour of good Men towards thoſe who are either Neglecters and Deſpiſers of Religion in general, or ſo unhappy as to be involved in ſome particular great and pernicious Errors; the Duty of univerſal Love and Charity, obliges us to endeavour by all the Ways of Gentleneſs, Inſtruction and Reproof, to bring them to Repentance and a better Mind. Magiſtrates indeed, and thoſe who are placed in Authority, may and ought to make uſe of Punishment and Severity, towards thoſe who are guilty of ſuch Crimes, as are deſtructive of humane Society; and the ſtrict Execution of Good Laws, is in that Caſe

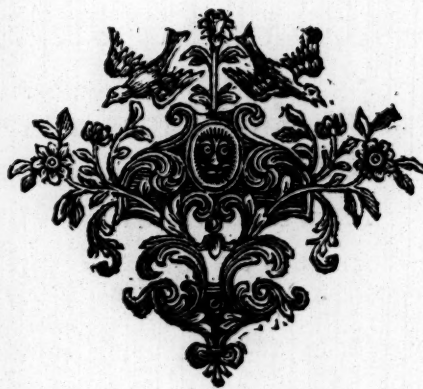
<sup>2</sup> Tim. ii. an Inſtance of the greateſt Love and Charity to the Publick. But otherwiſe, 'tis the Duty of a *Servant of the Lord*, not to *ſtrive*, but to be gentle unto all Men,

*apt*



*apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repen-* Serm. I.  
Jam. i. 20.  
*tance to the Acknowledgement of the Truth. For, the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God: And our Saviour himself severely condemns That Spirit, which some of his Disciples discovered, when they desired to call for Fire from Heaven, upon the Samaritans who refused to give him reception. Such Persons as are not yet come to have a right Sense of Religion in general, 'tis our Duty to persuade by Reason and Arguments; to convince them of the Being, Attributes and Providence of God; of the Necessity and infinite Importance of Religion; of the unalterable Difference of Good and Evil; of the Reasonableness, Excellency, and positive Evidence of the Christian Revelation. And those who are so unhappy as to be involved in any particular pernicious Errors, 'tis our Duty to inform, instruct, reprove, and by all Christian Means endeavour to bring them back to the Acknowledgement of the Truth: Taking Care above all Things, to show them by our good Examples, and by the Influence of the Truth upon our own Lives; that we have no other Design in endeavouring to convince them, but theirs and our own Salvation. In*  
promo-

Serm. I. promoting which Ends, we shall do well  
to have always imprinted on our Minds  
those excellent Words, wherewith *St. James* concludes his Epistle: *Brethren,*  
*if any of you do err from the Truth, and*  
*one convert him; let him know, that he*  
*which converteth the Sinner from the Er-*  
*ror of his Way, shall save a Soul from*  
*death, and shall hide a Multitude of*  
*Sins.*



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the FUNERAL of

*MARY* Lady COOKE,

Late WIFE of

Sir *John Cooke*, of *Doctor's-Com-*  
*mons, London*, Knight, Doctor  
of L A W S, &c.

On Tuesday, *October 11. 1709.*

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2 C O R. V. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing ra-*  
*ther to be absent from the Body, and to*  
*be present with the Lord.*

THE Apostle in the foregoing Serm.  
Chapter declares at large how the II.  
Assurance of a Resurrection from  
the Dead, not only enabled him to per-  
form cheerfully all the Duties of a Chri-  
stian Life, but supported him also, so as  
not to faint under the severest Persecutions,  
which



Serm. which continually threatned him even

II. with Death it self. *Therefore as we have received Mercy, saith he, we faint not, ver. 1. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplex'd, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, ver. 8, 9. The Ground of which Comfort and Support, he expresses, ver. 10. Always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh; for we which live, are always delivered unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh. And more clearly, v. 13, 14. Having the same Spirit of Faith-----, and knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. After which he returns to the Inference he began with in the first Verse; v. 16. For which Cause we faint not, but tho' our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day; for our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen, are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal.*

From

From this general Consideration of the Sermon.  
Certainty of a *future* Life, as a Ground II.  
of Support and Comfort under the Trou-

bles of the *present*; he proceeds in the beginning of the fifth Chapter, to consider the particular Nature of *that Body* we shall be cloathed withal at the Resurrection; and of that intermediate State, the Soul will find it self in, between Death and Judgement. As to the Nature of our future *Body*, he tells us, v. 1. that whereas our present Body is an *earthly House*, a Building fram'd out of the most perishable Materials, and of a Texture most frail and brittle; a *Tabernacle* tending perpetually in its own Nature by a gradual Decay towards a *Dissolution*, and during that short Period which it is capable of continuing, being every moment liable to be destroy'd by sudden Violence, by the Power of Men, and by the Assaults of acute Diseases: The Body we shall have hereafter, shall on the contrary be a *Building of God*, an *House not made with Hands*, *eternal in the Heavens*; a Body, fram'd immediately by God himself, made capable of induring for ever, and fitted to the Circumstances and Enjoyments of that Place, which God has provided for it in the Heavens.

The frequent Meditation upon which happy State, causes good Men to *groan earnestly*,



Serm. earnestly, v. 2. *desiring to be cloathed*

II. *upon with our House which is from Heaven; if so be that being cloathed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* This Passage some understand to refer to what the same Apostle informs us of, in the 15th Chapter of his foregoing Epistle, concerning those who shall be found alive at our Lord's second Coming; that they shall not *die*, but be *changed*; not be *uncloath'd* of this mortal Body, but *cloath'd upon* with their heavenly Habitation; and that the Apostle here expresses a Desire of escaping Death, and of being found among those, who, without becoming *naked*, without being *separated* from the Body at all, shall *in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye*, be *changed*, or *cloathed upon* with an immortal and incorruptible Body. But there is no need of interpreting the Words to this Sense. For when the Apostle affirms that we are desirous, not to be *uncloathed*, but to be *cloathed upon*; not to be found *naked*, but to be *cloathed upon with our House which is in Heaven*; he does indeed prefer our *State after the Resurrection*, to the *State of Separation*; and represents good Men wishing to be deliver'd



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Serm.

II.

liver'd from the Burden of the Flesh, not merely for the Sake of being separate from the Body, but chiefly and principally in Hopes of being clothed with a better and more glorious one. But yet it does not therefore follow, that he meant to extend this Desire so far as to the escaping of Death wholly, and the avoiding to enter into the separate State at all; or that he thought this peculiar Circumstance of those who shall be found alive at the Lord's second Coming, could possibly be the Case of those who lived so early as in his own Time. Nay rather the contrary seems clearly to follow from the 6th Verse, and from the Words of the Text; where he speaks of *being absent from the Body*, as of a Thing that would certainly happen to them, and which was truly desirable to good Men; and the Expectation whereof was a Ground of *Confidence* and Support under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death: Because though the State after the Resurrection, when we shall be clothed with incorruptible and immortal Bodies like unto our Saviour's glorious Body, shall be much more happy and desirable, than the State of Separation; yet that State of Separation it self, that imperfect and incomplete State, is far superior to our Condition in this World, and

D

more

Serm.

II.

more eligible than the Burden of the present Flesh. *Therefore we are always confident, says he, knowing that whilst we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by Faith, not by Sight;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

The Words are not well rendered, *whilst we are at Home in the Body.* For this Body is not our proper *Home*; we are only *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* in the present World; and our Life is by St. *Peter* justly call'd, *The Time of our sojourn here.* But, whilst we dwell in the Body, (so the Words ought rather to be rendred,) or (as the same Word is translated in the following Verse,) *whilst we are present in the Body*; whilst we continue in this World; we are *absent* from the Fountain of Life and Happiness: We are at a Distance from the heavenly *Jerusalem*, which is our proper Country; we are *absent from the Lord*; and live by *Faith* only, not by *Sight*. But, God having given unto us the earnest of his holy Spirit, we are confident and have full Assurance of the Truth of these Things: We wean our selves therefore from the sensual Injoyments of the present World; we support and comfort our selves with these Meditations, under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death;

we



we are willing rather to be absent from the Body, (whensoever it shall please God to release us ; ) and to be present with the Lord, which is far better. Sermon II.

In the Words, and in the Context, we may observe the following Particulars plainly implied.

1<sup>st</sup>, That we must all shortly be absent or separate from this Body.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That this State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That, to good Men, it is a State of great Happiness, a being present with the Lord.

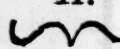
4<sup>thly</sup>, That the Consideration of that intermediate Happiness, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death. We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body,

5<sup>thly</sup> and Lastly, That this intermediate State, tho' it may be a State of Happiness, yet is by no Means equal to that Happiness which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection. For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality, might be swallowed up of Life.

1<sup>st</sup>. 'Tis supposed in the Words, that we must all shortly be absent or separate from this Body. 'Tis evident there is no need to prove, and one would think



Serm. there should be no need to *remind* Men,

II.  that they must all die; when they have every Day such mournful Occasions as these, to excite their Consideration. Yet so it is, that even *this very Thing*, the *Frequency* of other Examples and the indisputable *Certainty* of their own Mortality, makes them stand in need of the more earnest Exhortations, to persuade them not to forget or neglect it. For as the strongest Objects that make perpetually an equal and continued Impression upon constant Presence, do affect us little more, than if they made no Impression upon the Sense at all; and as those great *Phænomena* of Nature, which we observe to return in the constant Course of every Day, excite in us less Admiration, tho' in themselves the most wonderful of all the Works of God, than Things much less remarkable, which appear but seldom: So the absolute Certainty of our own Mortality, which leaves no Room for Inquiry or Debate, makes Men almost as much lay aside the Thoughts of it, as if the Certainty were on the other Side of the Question; and the frequency of Instances which ought perpetually to remind us what we must speedily expect, does by a strange Carelessness and habitual Neglect, reconcile Men in such Manner to the Sight of Mortality in others, as if they

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they themselves were not concern'd in the Example. They shake off the Thought of it, as if there could be no Benefit in meditating upon what cannot be prevented; and they look upon it as importune and troublesome to remind them of that, which 'tis not possible but they must already know, yet that Knowledge, without Meditation, is like unto Ignorance; because it has no Effect, and makes no Impression. 'Tis like the speculative Knowledge of a Truth, which concerns us not; or like the habitual Understanding of a Demonstration, never recollected. The Reason of this great Stupidity, seems to be the Uncertainty of the *Time* of every Man's Death; which makes Men look upon Life, as a long indefinite Period; and, because the *Time* of their Death is *uncertain*, 'tis to them as an *Uncertainty* in the *Thing it self*. To prevent this Folly therefore, the Scripture is perpetually reminding us, and putting us upon considering, that *our Days on Earth are as a Shadow, and there is no abiding*, 1 Chron. xxix, 15; That *they are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, Job. vii. 6. That *they are swifter than a Post*; that *they flee away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey*, Job ix. 26. That they are as a *Sleep, as a Watch in the Night, as a Tale that is told*, Psal.

Serm.

II.



Serm. xc. 5, 4, 9. That our Life is a Vapour,  
 II. *that appeareth for a little Time, and then*  
 ~~~~~ *vanisheth away, Jam. iv. 14. That Man*  
cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut
down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and
continueth not, Job xiv. 2. In the Morning
it flourisheth and groweth up, in the Even-
ing it is cut down and withereth, Psal.
xc. 6. All which Similitudes are elegantly
summ'd up together by the Author of the
Book of Wisdom: Wisd. v. 9. All these
Things are passed away like a Shadow, and
as a Post that hasteth by; and as a Ship
that passeth over the Waves of the Water,
which when it is gone by, the Trace there-
of cannot be found, neither the Path-way
of the Keel in the Waves; or as when a
Bird has flown thro' the Air, there is no
Token of her Way to be found-----; or like
as when an Arrow is shot at a Mark, it
parteth the Air, which immediately cometh
together again, so that a Man cannot
know where it went thro'; even so we in
like Manner, as soon as we were born, be-
gan to draw to our End, and have no
Sign of Virtue to shew. These Descrip-
tions of the Vanity and Transitoriness of
human Life, are too evidently true, to
stand in need of any Proof. Yet the Riches
and Honours, the Pleasures and Allure-
ments of the World, hinder Men too u-
usually from considering them; and Men
 act

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act as if they were to live here for ever. *Serm.*
Providence therefore is very kind to us, in *II.*
sending Afflictions upon us to awaken us
out of this Lethargy; and we should be
very Wise and Just to our selves, if we
would suffer our selves to be brought to
serious Consideration by the Troubles and
Afflictions of others. When we see others
taken out of the World before us, we
know their Case must in a short Time of
Necessity be our own; and the Concern
we always see dying Persons under, should
make us endeavour without Delay in the
Time of our Health and Strength, to lay
the Foundation of a good Conscience a-
gainst the Day of Tryal. We are sure
Eternity can never be very far distant
from any of us; and we are always un-
certain, but it may possibly be very near.
And when Death approaches, Sickness
and Pain are alone a Burden sufficient;
and it will require all the Helps of Rea-
son and Religion, all the Strength of the
Spirit of a Man, to *sustain* at that Time
the *Infirmities* of Nature. But if the
Spirit it self be wounded; if the Consci-
ence be distracted with too just Fears; if
the great Work of Religion be then *un-*
done, and yet impossible to be *done*; if
the *Spirit* of the Man, which should *sup-*
port him under his *Infirmity*, does it self
much more stand in need of *Comfort and*

Serm. *Support; who can bear it?* This is the

II. Time when all false Colours vanish, and
 the great Difference and Distinction of
 Men begins truly to appear. Now the
 Profane, the Covetous, the Voluptuous,
 the Mocker and Scoffer at Religion, be-
 gins to judge by other Measures; and if
God should require some great Thing of
 him, *would he not do it?* On the contra-
 ry, the Sober and Pious, the Righteous
 and just Person, reflects then with un-
 speakable Comfort upon his past Life;
 when he remembers that he has either
 liv'd always innocent from great Crimes;
 or at least that the Sins of his Youth have
 not been so great, as the Repentance and
 Obedience of his wiser Age. And when
 the Vail is removed by Death, which
 transmits these different Persons to that
 State, where they are to wait for the fi-
 nal Sentence of the unerring Judgment of
 God; they themselves will judge still
 more and more clearly concerning the true
 Nature of Things, and of their own De-
 fects. For Death is not a total Extincti-
 on of the Man, but a Separation only of
 the Soul from the Body for a Time. Which
 was the next Particular I propos'd to dis-
 course of. And here, for Brevity Sake,
 I shall put the

Second and Third Particulars into one:
viz. That the State of Separation, is not

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a State of absolute Insensibility, but to good Men a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord.* All the *Natural* Arguments, (for the *Moral* Arguments indeed prove only a future State *in general*, by the Resurrection of the *Body*, or *otherwise*;) all the *Natural* Arguments, I say, which prove to us by Reason the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, seem to prove no less strongly, that the separate State is not a State of Sleep or Insensibility. For if it is a good Argument to conclude with *Cicero*; *when I consider*, says * he, *with what Swiftneſs of Thought the Soul is endued, with what a wonderful Memory of Things paſt, and Forecaſt of Things to come; how many Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful Inventions it has found out; I am perſuaded that That Nature, which is Poſſeſſor of ſuch Faculties, cannot be Mortal*: If this, I ſay, be a good Argument, (and a very excellent one it is;) it ſeems no leſs juſt to infer with *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*: *I cannot imagine, ſaith † he, that the Soul*

Serm.
II.

* Quid multa? Sic mihi perſuaſi, ſic ſentio; quum tanta celeritas animorum ſit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ ſcientiæ, tot inventa; non poſſe eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, eſſe mortalem. *Cic. de ſenectute.*

† Οὐτοι ἔγωγε, ὦ παῖ, εἰδὲ τῶν πάποτε ἐπείδω, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ, ἕως αὖ ἐν θνήσκῃ σώματι ἦ, ζῇ· ὅταν δὲ ταῦτα ἀπαλλαγῇ, τεθνηκεν.—Οὐδέ γε ὅπως ἀφρον ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπειδὴν ἔ' ἀφρονὶ σῶματι δίχα ᾗ, εἰδὲ τῶν πίπτεσθαι.

while

Serm. *while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and*

II. *that, when it is separated from it, then it should die: I cannot persuade my self, that the Soul, by being separated from this Body, which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become it self likewise devoid of Sense: On the contrary it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the Mind is separated from the Body, then it should become most of all sensible and intelligent. But these were only the reasonable Conjectures of wise and considering Men. The Scripture assures us with more Certainty and Authority, that blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Rev. xiv. 13. Which Rest, that it is not the mere Rest of utter Insensibility, may be gathered from ch. vi. v. 9. where 'tis said, I saw under the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud Voice, &c. The same Thing is intimated to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man and Lazarus; where the Soul of Lazarus is represented as carry'd by Angels into Abraham's Bosom, and that he was comforted in that Place, Luke xvi. 22, 25.*

Ἄλλ' ὅταν ἄγγελος ἔκκαρτος ὁ νῆς ἐκκεῖται, τότε ἔφρονι-
μώτατον εἰς αὐτὸν εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

And

And more clearly yet, in his Promise to the Penitent Thief, *Luke xxiii. 43. Verily I say unto thee, to Day shalt thou be* Serm. II.

*with me in Paradise. To Day, that is, immediately, in the State of Separation, before the Resurrection of Christ, and his Ascension into his Kingdom. St. Paul had such a Notion of the Happiness of that State, that tho' his abiding in the Flesh he knew was better for the Church, yet he was in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better for himself, Phil. i. 23, 24. And in the Text he declares; Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. The present Life he calls, walking only by Faith; the State after Death, walking by Sight, or being present with the Lord. And accordingly all the best Writers in the Primitive Times, when they have Occasion to mention the State of good Men departed, always speak of them as being * in the Place appointed for them with the Lord; as †*

* *Εἰς τὸ ὀφειλόμενον αὐτοῖς τόπον εἰς ᾧ καὶ τῷ κυρίῳ.*
Polycarpi Epist.

† *Παναχὴ ᾧ ὁ Σωτὴρ ὁραθήσεῃ, καθὼς ἄξιοι ἔσονται οἱ ὁσώντες.* Irenæus, lib. 5.

beholding

Serm. *beholding our Saviour in Paradise, after*

II. *such a Manner as they are worthy to behold him; as being in a Place of Rest, Refreshment, Comfort, and Expectation of the Completion of their Happiness at the Resurrection. Directly contrary to the Innovations of the Church of Rome, who, without any Appearance of Reason, and without any Colour of Authority from Scripture, teach that the Souls of good Men are tormented in a Purgatory of imaginary Fire, very little differing from that of Hell itself. How much better does even a Jewish Writer express himself upon this Subject! Wisd. iii. 1. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the Unwise they seemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Misery; and their going from us, to be utter Destruction; but they are in Peace. For tho' they be punish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.*

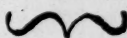
4thly, The Consideration of the Soul's intermediate Happiness in the separate State, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death: *Therefore we are confident, says the Apostle, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* 'Tis some Degree of Comfort against the Fear of Death, to consider that it is the Necessity of Nature

Funeral of MARY Lady COOKE.

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ture, and the Apointment of God to all Men ; *Heb. ix. 27, It is appointed unto Men once to die.* 'Tis some further Degree of Support, to consider that Death is as it were the Haven of Rest, from the Storms and Troubles, the Calamities and Sorrows of the World: *Job. iii. 17, There the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The Small and Great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master.* But after all the Arguments of 'Comfort that can be drawn from Reason and Philosophy, Death is still the *King of Terrors* to Nature, and is become much more so thro' Sin. But Christ has now, to all such as repent and truly amend, taken away that Sting, and removed the Fear; having destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and delivered them, who thro' fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage. *Heb. ii. 15. Death is now abolished, to all good Men, 2 Tim. i. 10. and become nothing else but a Passage to a glorious Immortality.* And 'tis a great Addition of Comfort and Support, to consider that even that Passage it self is not a dark Passage thro' a State of utter Insensibility; but a being present with the Lord in some Degree of

Serm.
II.



Serm. of Communication, and Fore-taste of a
II. more perfect Happiness.

~~~~~ The pious Lady, whose Death we now lament, took particular Satisfaction in meditating frequently upon this Subject; and in enquiring into the full Extent and Signification of those Texts, which relate to it. She made the holy Scriptures her daily Study and Delight, and was much conversant in many other excellent Books of Piety and Devotion: and the Comfort such Studies administer against the Fear of Death, is then truly effectual, when 'tis applied by such Persons, as are prepar'd to receive it by the preceding Course of a holy Life. For the space of two Years wherein Providence allotted me to perform the Duties of my Ministry in the Parish wherein she dwelt, (and wherein I receiv'd singular Favours, particularly from the eminent Society for the Profession and Practise of the Civil-Law, which ought always gratefully to be acknowledged;) I was my self a Witness of her constant and never-failing Attendance upon the publick Service of God, and the Administration of the Sacrament, with the most exemplary Zeal and Devotion: And, in all the Opportunities I had of observing it, her private Conversation appear'd perfectly agreeable to her religious Behaviour in publick. Which, in a Person  
in

*Funeral of MARY Lady COOKE.*

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in the Strength and Vigour of her Age, very little exceeding thirty Years at the Time of her Death, is *an Example* that may be recommended with Justice and Usefulness. But to enlarge too far upon Characters even of such truly pious Persons, is neither giving any real Advantage to the Memory of the Dead, nor of so much Benefit to the Living, as the exhorting them upon these Occasions to prepare themselves for Death, which they are all hastning to, by setting before their Eyes continually the most perfect Example of Christ, and the Precepts of the Gospel; in following of which, all good and holy Men and Women who have gone before us, have obtain'd a good Report.

*5thly and Lastly.* The intermediate State of Separation, though it may be a State of great Happiness, yet is by no Means equal to that Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection: *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burden'd; not for that we would be uncloath'd, but cloath'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* St. Paul, tho' he knew, that when he was *absent from the Body*, he should be *present with the Lord*, in a State of Rest and Security and perfect Assurance, in a State of great Happiness and Joy unspeakable; yet tells us, that the

*Crown*

Serm.  
II.



Serm. *Crown of Righteousness* was laid up for

II. him, not to be given him by the Righteous Judge before that great Day. And our Saviour himself bids the charitable Person expect his final *Recompence*, at the *Resurrection of the Just*. And in the Place before-cited, the Souls of the *Martyrs* themselves, which St. *John* saw in his Vision under the Altar, are represented as in a State of Expectation only; *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, &c. Rev. ix. 7. And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow-Servants also, and their Brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* In a Word, the Souls of the Righteous are doubtless as happy, as they can be in that imperfect State of Separation from their Bodies: But 'tis after the Resurrection only, that their Happiness shall be complete, and that they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father: When our Lord shall have changed this vile Body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body; according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself: That is, when this Body, which has now in it such manifest Principles of Mortality and Corruption; which consists now of such brittle and tender Parts, that every the least Violence disturbs and unfits them for their

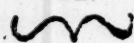
their Operations; when *this Body*, Serm.  
 which is now so weak and feeble, so II.  
 dull, heavy and unactive, that it clogs  
 the Soul, and retards and hinders its  
 spiritual Operations; when *this Body*,  
 which is now subject to so many Ca-  
 sualties, and has its Continuance de-  
 pending upon the fit Disposition of so  
 many little and easily disorder'd Parts,  
 that 'tis a greater wonder how we  
 continue to live a Day, than why  
 we die after so few Years Space; *shall*  
 be perfectly refin'd and purged from  
 all the Seeds of Mortality and Cor-  
 ruption; *shall* spring up into an incor-  
 ruptible and immortal Substance, which  
 shall be fitted to endure as long as  
 the Soul to which it is to be unit-  
 ed, even to all Eternity; *shall* become  
 so Strong and Powerful, so Active  
 and Vigorous, as even to be assisting  
 to the most spiritual Motions of the  
 Soul, to become every Way a fit  
 Organ and Instrument of its most ex-  
 alted Operations; and *shall* continue  
 in this perfect Health, Strength and  
 Vigour for ever. For God *shall* wipe  
 away all Tears from their Eyes, and  
 there *shall* be no more Death, neither  
 Sorrow nor Crying, neither *shall* there  
 E be



50

*A Sermon preach'd at the &c.*

Serm. *be any more Pain; for the former Things*  
II. *are pass'd away.*



To which happy State, that we  
may all arrive, God of his  
infinite Mercy grant, &c.



A SER-

A

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# SERMON

Preach'd before the *Honourable House of Commons*, at the Church of *St. Margaret, Westminster* : On *Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1709*. Being the Day of Thanksgiving for the Signal and Glorious Victory obtained near *Mons*, and for the other great Successes of Her Majesty's Arms, this last Year, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*.

PSAL. L. 23.

*Whofo offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

SER- **T**HERE is no Nation under Heaven, since the Times of God's governing the *Jews* by an immediate

Serm.  
III.

E 2

Theo-



Serm.

III.

Theocracy, that has seen more and clearer Instances of the Interposition of Providence on their behalf, or has had greater Blessings and Means of publick Prosperity put into their Hands; than we of this Nation have had. As *the Hills stand about Jerusalem*, said the Psalmist, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) *even so standeth the Lord round about his People*: As *the Seas encompass our Land*, may we no less justly say, even so does the Protection of *Providence* surround us on all Sides. We have enjoyed a long and uninterrupted Succession of the Blessings of Heaven from above, and of the Earth beneath; of fruitful Seasons, and a large and plentiful Increase. We have lived under a secure Establishment of all our private Rights and just Liberties, in a wise and well-constituted Government, and in the regular Execution of good and wholesome Laws. We have had the free Exercise of our Religion continued almost to us alone, when so many of those about us have been deprived of that inestimable Liberty. We have had Deliverances little less than miraculous, frequently vouchsafed us; and have seen many visible interpositions of Providence, in causing such Concurrences of Circumstances  
for

for our Advantage, as no humane Wisdom could either foresee, direct, or over-rule.

Serm.

III.

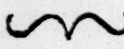
When, after a long Establishment of our Peace and Prosperity, we, like *Jeshurun*, waxed fat and kicked; when our Prosperity made us wanton, and we forgot God who poured these Benefits upon us; when Corruption of Manners prevailed over the Purity of our Religion, and we grew cool in our Zeal for the Service of God, and for the Honour of his Laws; then did it please God to threaten us with the Rod of arbitrary Power, and with the Fears of Popish Slavery; to awaken us out of our careless neglect of Religion, and to compose our little Differences and unchristian Animosities among ourselves. Yet did he threaten us only with these Judgments, and show us the Terrour of them as it were at a distance, but did not suffer them to prevail over us; removing them from us by an unparalleled Deliverance, almost as soon as they approached, and that we began to feel the Smart of them. And from the Time of that wonderful Deliverance, even unto this Day, has God continued to bless us with *Success Abroad* under victorious Armies, and with *Peace and Plenty at*

Deut.

xxxii. 15.



Serm. *Home*, under pious and religious Princes.

III.  A great and always perpetual Series of Successes has attended *our Arms*, through the various Events and Hazards of a long, bloody, and expensive War; against the deep Counsels, and formidable Strength, of a cunning, potent, and formerly long-successful Enemy. And at the same Time, *we our selves* sit every Man *under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree*, in the secure and peaceable Enjoyment of whatever each one has a Right to possess. We enjoy almost all the Happiness and Blessings of *Peace*, even in the midst of a vigorous and bloody *War*; while the Sword and Fire consume round about us, and other fruitful Countries are ravaged and destroyed; while *Thousands fall beside us, and ten Thousands at our Right-hand*, and yet Providence protects us, that it *comes not nigh us*; while Want and Famine spreads Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a Distance threatens still severer Judgments of God. We are not liable to be perpetually spoiled, by the Violence of Arbitrary Power; and to be daily bereaved of our nearest and most valuable Rights, at the mere Will and Pleasure of a lawless Oppressor: But under the happy Influences

ences of a mild and most auspicious Government, and under the Protection of wise and good Laws, we enjoy as much Liberty as can be desired by Any, who aim not at the Confusions of unlimited Licentiousness. And to complete this Happiness, we are *not only allowed* the free Exercise of the Reformed Religion, (which under some Governments who call themselves *Christian*, is persecuted even unto Death; and which we all remember the Time, when we had great Reason to apprehend we should have been deprived of it;) but the *Profession* of it is moreover encouraged by *Law*, and the *Practice* of it recommended not only by the *Command* but (which is of greater Influence) by the hearty *Example* also, of our pious and most religious Queen; who *in every Work that she begins in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek her God, she does it with all her Heart, and prospers*, 2 Chron. xxxi. 21.

If these be Things which are the proper Subjects of Praise and Thanksgiving, and call for the heartiest Expressions of our Gratitude to *him who redeemeth our Life from Destruction, and crowneth us with Mercy and Loving-kind-*



Serm. *ness*; undoubtedly there is no Nation

III. under the Sun, that has more Reason

Psalm. cxvi.  
12, 17.

this Day, than we, to say, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits that he has done unto me? I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.* And O! that Men would

Psalm. cvii.  
8.

ver. 32.

indeed, with their Mouths and from their Hearts, by the Confession of their Lips, and in the Actions of their Lives, *therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men! That they would exalt him also in the Congregation of the People, and praise him in the Seat of the Elders! That there were in all of us such a Heart, that by making suitable returns of Praise and Obedience to God, for his past and present Benefits; we might shew our selves worthy of the Continuance of his Favour, and secure for the future the same Blessings, to our selves and our Posterity! Could we but prevail with our selves, not to abuse that Plenty wherewith God has blessed us, by Intemperance and Debauchery: Could we in the midst of that Peace, which we enjoy even while War surrounds us, forbear unreasonable Contentions,*  
and

and lay aside all our Unchristian Heats and Animosities among our selves: Serm. III.

Could we but use that Liberty we most justly value and boast of, so as not to abuse it to Licentiousness and Wantonness: Could we but in any Measure persuade our selves to *practice* the Religion, we are so zealous to *profess*, and banish from a *Christian* and a *reformed* Nation, Infidelity, Profaneness, and Immorality: In a Word, could we but find in our Hearts to *glorifie* God worthily for his great Mercies, and offer him *Praises* suitable to the wonderful Works which he has done for us; that is, *Praises* accompanied with the Works of Righteousness, so as to *honour* him indeed; this would be truly such an *ordering our Conversation aright*, that we might with good Grounds hope to have the Promise in the Text fulfilled upon our selves; and, by the Continuance of the same, and the Addition of more Blessings, might *see* compleated in us *the Salvation of God*. *Who so offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

In the Words we may observe these four Things.

1. That



Serm.

I. That God is to be glorified or  
III. honoured in all our Actions. He glorifies

me.

2. That, more particularly, upon Occasion of any great Mercy, any remarkable Blessing, or signal Interposition of Providence on our Behalf; we ought to shew forth his Glory by the most publick Acknowledgments, by the heartiest Praises and Thanksgivings to him. *Who so offereth Praise, glorifies me.*

3. That he who will return Thanks to God acceptably for past Mercies, so as to glorify him indeed; must for the future live suitably to the Profession he publickly makes, of his Sense of God's Providence governing the World, and of his entire Dependence upon it. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright.*

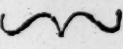
4. That to them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added, of still farther Blessings. *I will shew them the Salvation of God.*

I. That God is to be glorified or honoured in all our Actions. This is implied in those Words, *he glorifies me.* For, the declaring in what Manner, or by what Actions God is most glorified; and who the Persons are, that do most truly

truly *honour* him; is presupposing the Knowledge and Obligation of the Duty itself, that *God is to be glorified or honoured in all our Actions*: That is, *that* we are at all Times, and in all Places, to have a constant Regard to him, and Dependance upon him; to have a perpetual Sense of him upon our Minds, and to make continual Acknowledgments to him upon all proper Occasions; *that* he is the Author and Preserver of our Life and Being; *that* on him we rely, for all the good Things we hope for; and by his Permission, by his Grace and Favour, enjoy whatever Good we at present possess; *that* to him all possible Praise and Thanksgiving is due, for the Prosperity or Success we at any Time meet with, either in our private, or in the publick Affairs; *that* by Him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice; *that* His Blessing is upon a Nation, whenever pious Princes are established upon the Throne, and their Affairs prosper under a wise Administration, and Success accompanies their Arms *abroad*, and Peace and Plenty crowns their Endeavours *at Home*. On the contrary, *that* ill Success in any of our Undertakings; the blasting and defeating any  
of



Serm. of our Designs; the Calamities and Afflictions, of whatever Kind they be, that at any Time fall upon us, are still the Strokes of the same Hand, the Appointment of the same wise Providence, the good Pleasure of the same Supreme Governour and Director of all Things; designed for our Correction and Improvement to withdraw our Affections from Vanity and Trust in the World, and to lead us to Repentance and Amendment. This is, according to the wise Man's Advice, *Acknowledging God in all our Ways*: This is promoting a true Sense of Religion and Piety in the World: This is *honouring and glorifying God*. For, *the Glory of God*, is not any Thing accruing to *God himself*; 'tis not any Addition to *his* Greatness or Happiness, or any Accession to the Perfections of *his* Nature. But, as the true Glory of a *Prince*, is the *Obedience* and the *Prosperity* of his *Subjects*; so the true Notion of the *Glory of God*, is nothing else but the advancing and establishing his *Kingdom* among *Men*. And the *Kingdom of God*, saith *St. Paul*, is, *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis something *within* our selves, as our Saviour affirms, *St. Luke* xvii. 21.

xvii. 21. 'Tis the Conformity of the Serm.  
Creature to the Nature and Life of III.  
God, to the Law and Happiness of Hea-  
ven, by the Obedience of the Gospel,   
and by the Reconciliation of their Na-  
ture to the eternal and unchangeable  
Law of Righteousness and Holiness.  
Promoting the *Glory of God* therefore,  
is nothing else but advancing the In-  
terest of true Religion, and promoting  
the Practice of Virtue in the World.  
For, as Irreligion and Neglect of  
God, Profaneness or any vitious Practice  
in those who pretend to believe; do  
(as is said in the Case of *David*) give <sup>2 Sam. xii.</sup>  
*great Occasion to the Enemies of God* <sup>14.</sup>  
*to blaspheme*; and they who make  
*their boast in the Law*, as St. Paul <sup>Rom. ii.</sup>  
expresses it, do, *by transgressing the* <sup>23.</sup>  
*Law, dishonour God*; and *the Name*  
*of God is through them blasphemed a-*  
*mong Unbelievers*: So, on the con-  
trary, they who, by unfeigned Piety  
and Regard to God in the whole Course  
of their Lives, make *their Light to* <sup>Mat. v. 16.</sup>  
*shine before Men*; do, by letting others  
*see their good Works*, cause Men to *glo-*  
*rify their Father which is in Heaven*:  
That is, they bring other Men over to  
a true Sense of Religion, and persuade  
them to have a just Value and Esteem  
for

Serm. for it. This is the true Notion of the *Glo-*

III. *ry of God: This is doing all Things* for his Honour and Glory. And in this Sense 'tis manifest it is our indispensable Duty, to *honour and glorifie God in all our Actions*; by keeping up in our own Minds a constant Sense of him, of his Power and Greatness, of his Wisdom and Providence in governing the World, and disposing of all Events; and, as much as in us lies, exciting the same Sense of him, and Dependence upon him, in the Minds of *others* likewise.

2. As God is in some Measure to be honoured or glorified by *all our Actions* in general; so *more particularly*, upon Occasion of any *great Mercy or Deliverance*, upon Occasion of any *remarkable Blessing or signal Interposition of Providence on our Behalf*, we ought to show forth *his Glory* by the most *publick Acknowledgments*, by the highest Expressions of our *Gratitude*, by the heartiest *Praises and Thanksgivings* to him. *Who so offereth Praise, glorifies me*; Or, as it is in the former Translation, *Who so offereth me Thanks and Praise, he honour-eth me*. 'Tis all the Return, that weak and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governour of all Things; and therefore he is  
graci



graciously pleased to accept it, as a sufficient *Reward for all the Benefits that he has done unto us.* Our Goodness extendeth

Serm.

III.

*not to him, Psal. xvi. 2. neither can Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself, Job xxii. 12.* But tho' we cannot make him any Return for his Benefits, yet *thankful* to him for them we *can* be; and most inexcusable are we, if we neglect to be so. All that we are able to do, is to make humble acknowledgments of the Mercies we receive from him; and therefore we ought to do it in the gratefulest, and in the most publick and hearty manner we can. Adversity and Afflictions, such Corrections and Chastisements as his fatherly Hand thinks fit at any Time to lay upon us, it becomes us to bear with patient Submission, and silent Resignation to his Will; as being just Reproofs for our Sins, and Calls to Reformation and Repentance: But Blessings and Instances of Mercy, especially publick and national Blessings, call for publick Acknowledgments in such Expressions of Praise and Gratitude, as may declare to the World our being duly sensible from what Hand they come. Upon Account of the Works of *Creation*, all, even inanimate Creatures, are in Scripture called upon  
to

Serm. to praise the Lord ; that is, to contribute

III. Matter, and afford perpetual Occasion  
by the Meditation of them, to all rational  
Creatures to sing his Praises; *Praise him*  
(that is, afford continual subject-matter  
Pf. cxlviii. for his Praises,) *O ye Sun and Moon ;*  
3. *praise him all ye Stars of Light, &c.* The  
Works of *Providence*, are no less great  
and conspicuous, than those of Creation ;  
and for these Works, Men, who are chief-  
ly and most immediately concern'd in  
them, and who alone are able to discern  
and judge of them, are in Scripture re-  
quired perpetually to praise him: To  
praise him *perpetually*; because the Num-  
ber and Variety of them is so great, that no  
Tongue can worthily or sufficiently extol  
them: *Who can express the noble Acts of*  
Pf. cvi. 2. *the Lord, or show forth all his Praise?*

'Tis the least that any reasonable Person  
can do, in return for great Benefits ; to  
make a thankful Acknowledgment of  
them, to *him* from whom he receiv'd  
them. And yet because 'tis *all*, (as I be-  
fore observ'd) that weak and dependent  
Creatures *can* pay to *him* who is abso-  
lute Lord of all Things; therefore, when  
it proceeds from a sincere Mind and  
heartly Affection, 'tis accepted by him  
as the most valuable Sacrifice. *Ver. 9.*  
of this 50th Psalm; *I will take no Bul-  
lock,*

lock, saith God, out of thy House, nor  
He-goats out of thy Fold; for all the  
Beasts of the Forest are mine, and so are  
the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: Will  
I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the  
Blood of Goats? No: But offer unto God  
Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto  
the most High: And call upon me in  
the Day of Trouble; I will deliver  
thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. Again,  
Psal. cxvi. 12, 17. What shall I render  
unto the Lord, for all the Benefits that  
he has done unto me? I will offer to  
him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and  
will call upon the Name of the Lord.  
And Psal. lxxix. 30, 31. I will praise  
the Name of God with a Song, and  
will magnify him with Thanksgiving:  
This also shall please the Lord, better  
than a Bullock that has Horns and  
Hoofs. The same Notion is very elegantly  
expressed by the Prophet Hosea, ch. xiv.  
ver. 2. *We will render the Calves of our  
Lips*; i. e. We will return to God such  
heartly Thanks for his Mercies, as shall  
be more acceptable to him than the Sa-  
crifices of Calves or Sheep. The Phrase  
is translated by the LXX, the *Fruit* of  
our Lips: And so St. Paul cites it, Heb.  
xiii. 15. *Let us offer the Sacrifice of  
Praise to God continually; that is, the*  
F Fruit

Serm.

III.



Serm. *Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to*  
 III. *his Name.*

~ The Obligation to this Duty, is so evident and so reasonable, that it is sometimes in Scripture put for the whole of Religion; and the Neglect of it, marked as a total Defection from God. Thus St. Paul, *Rom. i. 21.* describing the inexcusable Corruption of the Heathen World, puts it principally upon this; *because, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were Thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned.* They cou'd not but know God, by his Works; yet they were not *Thankful*, nor glorified him according to that Knowledge; *therefore, says the Apostle, they are without Excuse.* The plainer and more obvious the Duty is, and the more fully God has declared his Acceptance of it, to *Us* who enjoy the Advantage of Revelation; the more unworthy still, and the more inexcusable, is *Unthankfulness* and Neglect of him. 'Tis the perpetual Complaint of the Prophets in the Old Testament, that after all the great Things that God had done for the Nation of the *Jews*, their Ingratitude was most provoking to him; *He made them ride on the high Places*  
*of*

of the Earth, that they might eat the Increase of the Fields, and suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock:----- But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;--- he soon forsook the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation, Deut. xxxii. 13. And 'tis recorded of a great and good King; one, concerning whom the Scripture testifies, that in other Things he did that <sup>2 Kings, xviii. 3, 4.</sup> which was right in the Sight of the Lord, so that before him there was none equal to him, neither after him arose there any like him; 'tis noted of Him, even of good King *Hezekiah*, as a very great Blemish, as a Thing very unnatural and unbecoming him, and at which God was highly displeased; that after the Lord had destroy'd his Enemies, by sending an Angel which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of Assyria; and after he had miraculously caused him to recover from a mortal Disease; yet he rendred not again according to the Benefit done unto him; for his Heart was lifted up; therefore there was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxxii. 21, 25.

The many wonderful Victories that God has granted Us, over the Armies of

Serm. a Prince more Potent than the King of  
 III. *Affyria*; and who has often thought to  
 ~~~~~ swallow us up more easily, than *Sennache-*  
rib did to destroy *Jerusalem*, and over-
 run the Land of *Judæa*; the many won-
 derful Victories, I say, which God has
 given *Us*, and particularly the great Suc-
 cesses wherewith he has blessed us this
 present Year, and for which we are now
 met together to return him Thanks; are
 such as will set as great or a greater Mark
 of Ingratitude upon *Us*, if our real
 Thankfulness be not answerable to our
 outward Expressions of Joy, and our
 consequent Behaviour suitable to both.

The Fatigue and Length of the fore-
 going Campaign, which had been drawn
 out into the very midst of Winter; the
 extreme Rigour of the ensuing Season,
 and the Backwardness of the Spring
 which occasioned such a Scarcity of For-
 age, that it was impossible to open the
 Campaign before the Summer was far
 spent; and at the same Time the Arti-
 fices made use of by our Enemies to a-
 muse us with false Appearances and de-
 ceitful Insinuations of their Desire of
 Peace, and to try if from thence Means
 might be found to create any Divisions
 or Jealousies among the Allies; gave
 some Hopes to *France*, that they should
 have

have been able to avoid the Blow where-
with they were threatned; and that, by
gaining Time, they might, at least for
this Summer, have escaped the Danger
to which by their former Losses they
seem'd to be expos'd. But the Provi-
dence of God, directing our Counsels,
the Unanimity and Steadiness of the Al-
lies, the Prudence and Vigilance of our
Generals, and the Indefatigableness of
our Troops, entirely disappointed the
Enemies Expectation: And the Cam-
paign began with the taking of one of
the strongest Fortresses in *Europe*; in the
Fortifying of which, no Pains, no Cost
had been spared, for a Trial how far it
was possible to increase Strength by the
Perfection of Art. To prevent further
Losses of this Kind, the Enemy resolv'd
to hazard a Battle; yet in such Circum-
stances, that, according to the usual Mea-
sure and Judgment of Events in War,
they thought themselves to run no *haz-
ard*. But in the Issue it appear'd, that
thro' the Courage and Conduct of our
Generals, whose Greatness as no History
can parallel, so no Character can do Ju-
stice to, and thro' the Bravery and Intre-
pidity of our Troops, which as no Dif-
ficulties can withstand, so no Words can
sufficiently express; those mighty In-
trenchments,

Serm. trenchments, those double and treble De-
 III. fences, wherein the Enemies thought
 ~~~~~ themselves so secure, served only to in-  
 crease the Glory of the Arms of the Al-  
 lies, and to convince the Enemy how  
 little Hopes remained of their ever gain-  
 ing any Advantage over those Troops up-  
 on *equal* Ground, against whom they  
 could not defend themselves upon the  
*most unequal*. Nevertheless, according  
 to their usual *Vanity*, they boasted of a  
 Victory; unless we will rather ascribe it  
 to their beginning to put on some Degree  
 of *Modesty*, when they declare they esteem  
 it the noblest Atchievement and the  
 greatest height of their Glory, to have  
 been able to make a *Retreat* after being  
 beaten, with *less Loss than usual*. But in a  
 Matter of this Nature, 'tis not of so much  
 Importance what *Representations*, what  
*artful Descriptions* may be made of the  
 Action itself; 'Tis the *Effect*, the *Conse-*  
*quences* of great Actions, that afford the  
 truest Judgment of the Greatness of the  
 Success. And here it was sufficiently evi-  
 dent *on which Side*, and *to what Degree*  
 Victory declar'd itself; when the imme-  
 diate Consequence of the Battle, was the  
 laying Siege to another strong Town,  
 and the taking it in a short Time with-  
 out the Enemies being in a Condition so  
 much

much as to *offer at* any Attempt of coming to its Relief.

Serm.

III.

For these great and continu'd Successes, wherewith the Providence of God has vouchsafed to bless us, let us make thankful Acknowledgement to his divine Majesty, in the Words of *David*, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name.*

To neglect acknowledging the Hand of Providence in these great Events, would be not only base *Ingratitude* and *Unworthiness*, but also the greatest and most inexcusable *Inconsiderateness*. For since *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; since the wisest Counsels do not always prosper, nor the best laid Designs constantly take Effect; but the Providence of God overrules all Events, by secret and undiscern'd



Serm. Springs; 'tis to his Blessing wholly, we

III. must thankfully acknowledge, that even  
 the best concerted Measures owe their  
 Success. 'Tis by *his* Blessing, that *Un-*  
*animity* is preserv'd among the *Allies*,  
 that *Generals* are inspir'd with *Wisdom*,  
 and *Troops* with *Undauntedness and Bra-*  
*very*; And 'tis by the Continuance of the  
 same Blessing, that *that Unanimity,*  
*Conduct and Courage*, are attended with  
 Success. *Unanimity* has been, with the  
 greatest Advantage, on our Enemies Side:  
 Their Soldiers sometimes have not been  
 void of *Bravery*, nor their *Generals* of  
*Skill*: Yet have they been defeated in  
 Battle after Battle, till the Strength of  
 the potentest Monarch upon Earth has  
 been almost entirely broken, and his  
 Power reduc'd to an Extremity of Dis-  
 tress. *The King shall mourn, and the*  
 Ezek. vii. *Prince shall be cloathed with Desolation,*  
 27. *and the Hands of the People of the Land*  
*shall be troubled; I will do unto them af-*  
*ter their Way, and according to their*  
 Isa. xli. 20. *Deserts will I judge them: That they*  
*may see, and know, and consider, and*  
*understand together, that the Hand of*  
*the Lord has done this, and the Holy One*  
*of Israel has created it: That they may*  
 Ps. cix. 27. *know that this is thy Hand, and that*  
*thou, Lord, hast done it.*

Nor

Nor ought it to be omitted, that, Serm. III.  
 next under *God* who is the first Author of all Victory, all due Honour and Acknowledgment is to be paid to the *Instruments*, by which our Successes have been accomplish'd; the Wisdom and Conduct of the Generals, and the Bravery of those who executed their Commands. For, though Providence has indeed, in the whole Course of this War, very signally interpos'd in our Behalf; yet not by immediate Miracle, as in the Days of *Jehosaphat* King of *Judah*, when it was said to them by the Prophet, 2 Chron. xx. 17. *Ye shall not need to fight in this Battle, set your selves, stand ye still, and see the Salvation of the Lord.* But the Blessings of Providence are convey'd to *Us*, thro' the Wisdom and Diligence of second Causes. For as, on the one Hand without the Blessing of Providence, the greatest Wisdom of Man is Folly, and his Strength Weakness; and *a Horse is counted but a vain Thing to save a Man, neither shall it deliver any Man by its great Strength:* Ps. xxxiii. 17. So neither on the other Hand have we now any Reason to expect, that Providence, will work for us direct Miracles, but only blest the Endeavours of subordinate Causes. Wherefore all due Acknowledgments

Serm. ments, ought to be made to the Instru-

III. ments, by whose Means we are deliver'd  
 from our Enemies, and by whose Hands  
 is work'd for us *the Salvation of God*.  
 And 'tis noted in Scripture as a great  
 Reproach upon the Children of *Israel*,  
 that they were sometimes ungrateful to  
 the Persons by whom God had work'd  
 their Deliverance, and that they remem-  
 ber'd 'em not *according to all the Good-  
 ness that they had shew'd unto Israel*,  
*Judg. viii. 35.*

3. He that will *return Thanks* to God  
 acceptably for past Mercies, so as to *glo-  
 rify him indeed*; must for the future *live  
 suitably* to that Profession he pretends to  
 make, of his Sense of God's Providence  
 in governing the World, and of his entire  
 Dependence upon it. *To him, that order-  
 eth his Conversation aright.* The Expres-  
 sions of our present Joy, must be such as  
 become the Gospel of Christ; and the fol-  
 lowing Part of our Lives must show, that  
 our Praises proceed not out of feigned Lips,  
 publick Praises and Thanksgivings are ac-  
 ceptable to God, as Part of our Religi-  
 ous Worship and Adoration of him; but  
 'tis then only so, when the Declarations  
 of our Mouths are the real Significations  
 of the Intentions of our Hearts, and our  
 Designs are not to abuse those Mercies  
 which we thank him for. We must fore-  
 turn



turn our Thanks for past Mercies, as that, by their having a due Influence upon us, we may show our selves worthy of the Continuance of them, and of God's bestowing still more upon us; and then our Praise will be indeed an acceptable Sacrifice. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye RIGHTEOUS, saith the Psalmist; for it becometh well the Just to be thankful,* Psal. xxxi. 1. But of the *Wicked* it may truly be affirm'd, that as their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomination to the Lord*. Serm. III.

4. To them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added of yet farther Blessings: *I will shew them the Salvation of God.* They who worthily express their Thanks for past Mercies, not by debauch'd and unseemly Mirth, but by truly honouring and fearing God, may reasonably hope for more Occasions of praising him. If ye be *Willing and Obedient*, ye shall eat the *Fat of the Land*; and the Lord will delight to do you good. Prov. xxiii.

Our Praises and Thanksgivings for past Victories, if accompany'd with sincere Obedience, will be, like the lifting up of *Moses's Hands* upon the Mount, a certain Evidence of future Success. Isa. i. 19.

God has already blest the Endeavours of our pious Queen with so great Prosperity, that we may justly say

say

Serm. say with the Psalmist, *Psal. xx. 6. Now*

III. *know I that the Lord helpeth his Anointed, and will bear him from his holy Heaven, even with the wholesome Strength of his right Hand. Some put their Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but we will remember the Name of our Lord our God: They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright. Nay; we have reasonable Grounds to apply to our Enemies the Prophet Nahum's Lamentation over the King of Assyria, ch. iii. v. 19. There is no healing of thy Bruise, thy Wound is grievous; all that hear the Bruit of thee, shall clap their Hands over thee; for upon whom has not thy Wickedness pass'd continually? Or that of the Prophet Isaiah, ch. xiv. v. 16. They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the Man that made the Earth to tremble? That did shake Kingdoms? That made the World as a Wilderness, and destroy'd the Cities thereof? That open'd not the House of his Prisoners? The sudden breaking of so great a Power, shows how easily Providence, if we prove ungrateful to him, can even yet disappoint our most probable Hopes, and, after all our Successes, bring us to Confusion. But the Example of Piety set us from the*  
 Throne

Throne, will, we hope, so effectually Sermon.  
discourage all Immorality and Profane- III.  
ness, and by spreading its Influence afar, ~~~~~

excite in the Nation such a Spirit of Virtue and true Religion, that God may be intreated of us *to continue* to bless us with Success, 'till the present bloody and expensive War terminates in such a Peace, as may establish upon a lasting Foot the Liberties of Europe. *The humble shall* <sup>Pf. xxxiv.</sup>  
*see this, and be glad : And their Heart* <sup>2.</sup>  
*shall live, that seek God. For God will* <sup>Pfal. lxix.</sup>  
*save Sion, and build the Cities of Judah,* <sup>35.</sup>  
*that Men may dwell there, and have it in Possession : The Posterity also of his Servants shall inherit it ; and they that love his Name, shall dwell therein.*

I add only a Word of Exhortation, and so conclude.

The Ground of our rejoycing, and returning Thanks to God for the Successes of the present War, is, that those Successes tend to secure to us the Ends, for which the War was at first undertaken, *viz. the procuring a safe and lasting Peace, the Support and Establishment of the present Constitution of our Government, the maintaining the Rights and Liberties of our selves and all Europe, and the Preservation of the Protestant Religion among us.*

First



Serm.

III. *First* therefore, if we will show ourselves truly thankful for the Successes of the *War*, let us endeavour to maintain such Unanimity among ourselves, as may convince our Enemies they can have no Hopes of putting an End to the *War*, but by consenting to such a *Peace*, as may be *safe and lasting*. And let us so lay aside all unreasonable Divisions and private Animosities, that whensoever it shall please God to put a successful End to the *War abroad*, we may enjoy the blessed Effects of *Peace and Charity*, of *mutual Confidence and Agreement at home*.

Jer. xxix.  
7.

*Secondly*, Let us heartily endeavour to promote the Interest of *that Government*, the Support and Establishment whereof is one principal Effect of the Successes for which we publicly return Thanks to God. Let us contribute our utmost, each in our proper Stations, to support a Government so happily establish'd; and to make the executive Part of it as easy, and as little burdensome as possible, in the Hands wherein it is lodg'd. *To seek the Peace of the City or Country wherein we dwell, and in the Peace thereof to expect Peace*, is Men's Duty and Interest even under *bad Governments*: How much more, under the best and most wisely constituted Government in the World

World, under the easiest and gentlest Administration, under a Government wherein nothing else is design'd but the preserving the publick Welfare and Happiness, the Security and Establishment of the Protestant Religion, the maintaining the Rights and Liberties both of Nations and of private Persons against Tyranny and Oppression: How much more, I say, in this Case, must all such be utterly inexcusable, who, under any Pretences whatever, foment Divisions and Animosities, Jealousies and groundless Suspicions, to weaken the Hands of the Government, and prevent the perfecting and securing upon a lasting Foot the foremention'd great and excellent Ends! We have been rescu'd by wonderful Deliverances, from the Rod of Arbitrary Power, from the Follies of Enthusiasm, and from the Superstitions of Popery: *Should we again grow weary of our own Happiness, and despise the Liberty wherewith God has bless'd us; should we again desire to join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations; would it not be just with God to suffer them still to become Thorns in our Sides, and their Gods to be a Snare unto us, and that he should be angry with us 'till he had consumed us?* Ezra. ix. 12.

*Thirdly*

Serm.  
III.

Serm.

III.

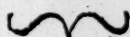
*Thirdly*, Let us take great Heed, lest by running into lawless and ungovernable Licentiousness, we abuse and destroy those *Rights and Liberties*, which have long been so earnestly and so justly contended for; and which the Successes we are now returning Thanks for, are the Means of securing to us upon a solid Foundation. God has bless'd us with great and glorious Success against our *Foreign Enemies*; which we hope he will continue to us, 'till the *Liberties of Europe* be establish'd by a firm and lasting Peace. Let us not after *That*, become Enemies to *Ourselves*, by a Licentiousness impatient of the most necessary Restraints; lest by our own Unthankfulness and *Intestine Confusions*, we deprive ourselves of the Benefit of a Blessing purchas'd with so much Blood and Treasure; and provoke God to suffer us to destroy ourselves by losing our *Liberty* wholly, while we affect more of it than is just and reasonable, or consistent with good Order and Government and the publick Safety. For as, on the one Hand, the Abuse of Arbitrary Power in *Governors*, has generally been the Occasion of putting People upon recovering the Liberties they had lost; so on the other Hand, Licentiousness or Abuse of Liberty



berty in the *People*, tends always to such Confusions, as terminate usually in Arbitrary Power again.

Serm.

III.



*Fourthly*, And above all, let us take Care to *practise* the *Religion* we *profess*, and for the Preservation whereof we are so highly concern'd. One of the principal Benefits of all the glorious Successes God has bless'd us with, is the securing the Reform'd Religion amongst us, against the Attempts of Popish Superstition. But what will it profit us, to bear the Name and Profession of a *Reform'd Religion*, if in our Practice and in Reality we have *no Religion at all*? Of what Use will it be to us, to be secur'd from the Vanities and Superstitions of Popery; if on the contrary we run into Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness?

Christianity itself, our Saviour assures us, is of no Advantage to those who do not obey *the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*; but their Portion will be among *Unbelievers*. In like Manner neither can any particular *Reformation of Religion* from the grossest Corruptions that have crept into it, be of any Benefit to those, whose *Manners* are not *reform'd* together with their Profession.

God, *who commandeth the Light* to 2 Cor. iv. *shine out of Darkness*, grant that *the Light* 4. 6.

G

of

82      *A Thanksgiving Sermon before, &c.*

Serm. *of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is*

III. *the Image of God, may so shine in our*  
~ *Hearts, as that we may bring forth Fruit*  
*worthy of that Light of the Knowledge of*  
*the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus*  
*Christ.*



A SER.

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A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

At St. JAMES's Chapel, on  
*Wednesday* the 8th of *March*,  
1709-10. being the Anniversary  
of Her Majesty's happy Acces-  
sion to the Throne.

---

*Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTIES Special Command.*

---

2 CHRON. xxxi. 21.

*And in every Work that he began in the  
Service of the Houſe of God, and in the  
Law, and in the Commandments to  
ſeek his God, he did it with all his  
Heart, and prospered.*

THERE is ſo neceſſary a Con- Serm.  
IV.  
nexion between the Happineſs of  
Governors, and that of the Peo-  
ple committed to their Charge; that as  
there lies an indiſpenſable Obligation upon  
G 2 Princes



Serm.

IV.

Princes and all that are in Authority, to govern in the Ways of Piety and Righteousness, in order to the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, as well as upon account of their own private Duty to God; so the People have always great Reason to be very thankful to God, when under the Administration of pious and religious Princes, they enjoy both in the natural Course of Things, the unspeakable Advantages of Peace and good Government, and have moreover a particular Title to the extraordinary Blessings of Providence, and to all the Promises God has made in Scripture to the Righteous, of national Prosperity.

God, who is perfect Goodness, and who communicates to all his Creatures such Proportions of Happiness, as is suitable to the original or improved Capacities of their Natures; has so framed and constituted the Nature of Man in this present State, that as *every particular Person*, with regard to the Temper of his own Mind, is in great Measure either Happy or Miserable within himself, in Proportion as his Passions are more or less subject to the Direction and Government of right Reason; so *Numbers of Men in Societies* likewise, do proportionably either promote or destroy each other's Happiness, as their Dealings

ings one with another are either just and righteous, equitable and charitable, honourable and publick-spirited; or, on the contrary, base and malicious, deceitful and unrighteous, violent and oppressive. The Happiness which Mankind would enjoy even here upon Earth, if all Men's Passions were kept subject to Reason, and every private Interest made subservient to the publick; is greater than can be expressed in Words, or than can easily be conceived in the Imagination. And to preserve that Happiness constant and perpetual, among Persons of such a Disposition; there would be wanting little other *Government*, but that of Right Reason; and few other *Laws*, than only the Dictates of Conscience, which are the Law of the most High. But this being the State, not of *Earth*, but of *Heaven*; not of the *present* World, but of the *new Heaven* and *new Earth*, wherein is to dwell universal Righteousness; that which in the next Place is most desirable, and which is the highest Degree of Happiness that can in Fact be attained to by Mankind here upon Earth; is, that the Practise of Righteousness and true Virtue may be established and encouraged by *Human Laws*; that the *Execution* of those Laws be intrusted in just and wise Hands;

Serm.  
IV.

Serm. and that Governors, both Supreme and  
 IV. Subordinate, at the same Time that they  
 ~~~~~ impartially administer Justice to others,  
 be themselves *Examples* of that Virtue and
 Goodness, which the Design of all good
 Laws is to promote the Practise of. That
 so, those who *fear not God*, nor *love Righteousness*, may yet either thro' *Shame*, or
the Fear of Men, be in some Measure re-
 strained within the Bounds of their Duty;
 and, if they will not, out of a Sense of
 Religion, endeavour to do *Good* in the
 World; yet at least, by the Coercion of
 wise Laws, they may be prevented from
 being able to do much *Mischief* in it.

As the *greatest Calamity* that can befall
 Mankind, is to be left in a State of *absolute Anarchy and Confusion*, to devour
 each other like wild Beasts; in a State,
 wherein Force gives Right to all Manner
 of Oppression, and Fraud and Violence
 are practised with all Impunity and with-
 out Restraint: And the *next* to this ex-
 treme Calamity, is *bad Government*;
 wherein either Laws promote the Mischiefs
 they ought to prevent; or Governors, a-
 gainst Law, encourage those very Practices
 which 'tis the whole Intention of their Of-
 fice to restrain; and Princes become Ter-
 rors to their Neighbours, and Destroyers
 of their own Subjects; and the Oppressed
 cry

cry, and no Man delivers them; and Violence fits in the Seat of Judgment, and Extortion and Rapine are establish'd as it were by Law: As such *bad Government*, I say, is the next great Calamity to having *no Government at all*: So, on the contrary, *next* to that Angelical State, that *State of Paradise*, wherein there would be little need of any other Laws or Authority than the fear of God; the *next great Blessing* Mankind is capable of, is *good Government*: Government, which truly answers the Design of its Establishment; which, in real Effects, represents the Divine Authority; which, by the whole Exercise of its Power, promotes the Honour of God in the World, and the publick Welfare and Happiness of Mankind.

Accordingly the principal Instruments which God generally makes use of, either in conveying his greatest temporal Blessings to Mankind, or in inflicting his severest Punishments on any Nation or People, are *good or bad Princes*.

'Tis remarkable in the History of the Jewish Nation, that when *they rejected the Lord, that he should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. The Threatning wherewith the Prophet was commanded to endeavour to deter them from their disobedient Purpose, was this, *ver. 9. Pro-*

Serm. *test solemnly unto them, and show them*
 IV. *the Manner of the King that shall reign*
 ~~~~~ *over them.----He will take your Sons, and*  
*appoint them for himself, for his Chariots,*  
*and to be his Horsemen; and some shall*  
*run before his Chariots: And he----will*  
*set them to ear his Ground, and to reap*  
*his Harvest, and to make his Instruments*  
*of War, and Instruments of his Chari-*  
*ots: And he will take your Fields and*  
*your Vineyards and Oliveyards, even*  
*the best of them, and give them to*  
*his Servants.----And ye shall cry out in*  
*that Day, and the Lord will not hear you.*  
 There have been some so unreasonable, as  
 to interpret this Passage, not as a threat-  
 ning of Punishment express'd in the Cha-  
 racter of a bad Government, but as a De-  
 legation of that Power which God intend-  
 ed all Governors should have a Right to  
 exercise. But the whole Scope and Con-  
 nexion of the Words, evidently shows the  
 contrary. And the Histories of the Ea-  
 stern Nations of the World, who have  
 long lived under the Exercise of such ab-  
 solute Arbitrary Dominion, show how  
 inexpressibly great a Calamity such Govern-  
 ments are to Mankind. And the Experi-  
 ence even of a neighbouring Nation alone,  
 which from one of the potentest and  
 most flourishing Kingdoms upon Earth,  
 has

has been reduced even to the extremest degree of Misery; is a sufficient Evidence of this Truth. Most reasonably therefore, and as a most proper Argument to deter the *Jews* from continuing in their wanton Disposition of rebelling against God's Government, might the Prophet threaten them with being made subject to such a Dominion.

On the contrary, in those Passages of Scripture, wherein are promised the greatest Temporal Blessings that God ever bestows on any Nation or People, such Promises are frequently and most emphatically express'd under Descriptions of mild and gentle Governments; of Governments wherein Justice is establish'd by wise Laws, or administer'd by the Will of Righteous Princes. In the lxxii<sup>d</sup> *Psalms*, the Description of a Prince, the Greatness and Prosperity of whose Government was to be a Type of the Blessedness of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*; is this, *He shall judge the People according unto Right, and defend the Poor:---He shall keep the simple Folk by their Right, defend the Children of the Poor, and punish the wrong Doer:---He shall come down like the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, even as the Drops that water the Earth: In his Time shall the Righteous flourish, yea, and abundance of*  
Peace

Serm.  
IV.



Serm.  
IV.

*Peace so long as the Moon endureth:---  
He shall deliver the Poor when he crieth;  
the Needy also, and him that hath no  
Helper: He shall be favourable to the  
Simple and Needy, and shall preserve the  
Souls of the Poor. And in the lx. Chap-  
ter of Isaiah, the final Restoration of Je-  
rusalem, which perhaps is no other than a  
Description of the Happiness of the Hea-  
venly State it self; because a nobler and  
loftier Figure could not be borrow'd from  
any Thing to be found on Earth, is ex-  
press'd by this Similitude: ver. 17. I will  
make thy Officers Peace, and thine Exaet-  
ors Righteousness: Violence shall no more  
be heard in the Land, Wasting nor De-  
struction within thy Borders; but thou  
shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy  
Gates Praise :---Thy People also shall be  
all Righteous.*

Some Proportions of this Blessedness,  
both by the natural Consequence of Things  
and by the positive Direction and Interpo-  
sition of Providence, do, even in this pre-  
sent mixt and uncertain State of Things,  
always attend any Nation; when Unrigh-  
teousness and Debauchery are in any Mea-  
sure discourag'd by the good Disposition of  
the People, or by the pious Endeavours of  
a Wise and Religious Governor. We of  
this Nation have (thanks be to God) experienc'd

rienc'd good and very great Effects of this Kind: And, was it not for our Unthank-  
fulness and Unworthy Returns for God's Blessings, we might have Reason still to expect more. The Jewish Nation, whose History was written for our Example, was always blessed with singular Prosperity, when under any pious Prince they lived in remarkable Obedience to the Law of God; and never in a more conspicuous Manner, than in the Days of that excellent Person, of whom it is recorded in the Words of the Text, that *in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and Prospered.*

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The Words are part of the Character of that pious Prince *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *he did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, according to all that David his Father had done; and that he kept such a Passover, as had not been kept before, from the Days of David unto that Day; and that he wrought that which was good and right and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his*

Serm. *his Heart*: And the Text adds, that he

IV. *Prospered*; and that God blessed him according to his singular Piety. For when *Sennacharib* King of *Assyria* came up against him and against *Jerusalem* with a mighty Host to take it, the *Lord* sent an *Angel*, (2 Chr. xxxii. 21.) which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of *Assyria*, so that he returned with Shame of Face to his own Land; And the *Lord* saved *Hezekiah* and guided him on every Side, and he was magnified in the Sight of all Nations from thenceforth, v. 23. We cannot in this profane and licentious Age, apply to our selves the Zeal wherewith the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* assisted their pious King in his earnest Endeavours to restore among them the Religion and Piety of their Ancestors: Neither, if we could, had we any Warrant to expect such *miraculous* Interpositions of the immediate Hand of God on our Behalf, as his peculiar People then experienc'd. But the Endeavours of that pious Princess whom God has now set over us, to discourage all Immorality, Debauchery and Profaneness, and to promote the Practice of true Religion and Piety in this Nation; are not inferior to the good Dispositions of any of the pious Kings of *Judah*: Nor  
are



are the Successes wherewith the Providence of God has bless'd us in this Auspicious Reign, against the common Enemies of our Religion and Liberties; much less remarkable, than the Deliverances work'd formerly by direct Miracle for the Children of *Israel*.

Serm.  
IV.

In the Words we may observē,

1. That the first and principal Care of good Princes, is to promote the Interest of true *Religion and Virtue among the People* committed to their Charge. *In every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his Heart.* Princes are the Vicegerents of God upon Earth; intrusted with Power from him for the Government of Men in Societies, and for the maintenance of Peace and Justice and good Order in the World. This Power is vested in different Hands, and limited with different Regulations, and exercised in different Manners, according to the Laws and Customs of different Nations: But the Power it self is of Divine Original and Appointment, being the Ordinance and Constitution of God; for which Reason Governors, both Supreme and Subordinate, are stiled in Scripture, *Gods*, and the immediate Ministers of God. Having therefore this Power by  
Divine

Serm. Divine Appointment, and representing

IV. God in the Exercise of it; 'tis manifest their  
 first and chiefest Care ought to be, to im-  
 ploy it in advancing *his* Honour and Glo-  
 ry, from whom they received it. Power  
 without Goodness, and Wisdom not im-  
 ployed in the promoting of Righteousness,  
 is the justest Object of Men's Fear and A-  
 version: But when those who are the Mi-  
 nisters of God in the Exercise of Power,  
 imitate him also in that more lovely Per-  
 fection of Goodness; and make it their prin-  
 cipal Business to encourage that universal  
 Virtue, the Establishment of which in the  
 World, is in the most acceptable Manner  
 fulfilling the Will of God, and promoting  
 his Honour and Glory; then do they most  
 eminently verify that Character the Scrip-  
 ture gives of them, *I have said ye are Gods,*  
*and ye are all the Children of the Most*  
*High.* The Instructions upon this Head,  
 given by *David* in his dying Words, are  
 very remarkable. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. *These*  
*be the last Words of David: David the*  
*Son of Jesse said, and the Man who was*  
*raised up on high, the Anointed of the*  
*God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist*  
*of Israel said, the Spirit of the Lord*  
*spake by me, and his Word was in my*  
*Tongue; the God of Israel said, the Rock*  
*of Israel spake to me: He that ruleth*  
 over

over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God. He must *himself* rule in the Fear of God; and he must make it his

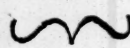
Serm.

IV.

chief and principal Care, to cause *Others* to fear him likewise. Accordingly we find the principal Part of the Character of all the good Kings of *Judah*, whose History is related in Scripture; taken from their Zeal to promote the Service and Worship of God, and the Establishment of true Religion in their Kingdom. Many of the Methods they used, agreeable to the then present State and Circumstances of Things, and to the extraordinary Commissions they had; are by no Means indeed to be imitated under the Gospel-State, or drawn into Example by the Practice of Christian Princes, who have no such special and immediate Warrants from God: But in general 'tis still their Duty, by all wise and christian Methods, by all Methods suitable to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, to employ the Power and Authority God has given them, in promoting the Interest of the true Religion, in encouraging Virtue and discouraging Vice. It is still true, that *a wise King scattereth the Wicked, and bringeth the Wheel over them*, Prov. xx. 26. 'Tis still true, that *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil*; that the Magistrate, supreme



Serm. preme or subordinate, *beareth not the*

IV. *Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of*  
 *God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon*  
*him that doeth Evil. Rom. xiii. 4. that*  
*he is, sent of God for the Punishment of*  
*evil doers, and for the Praise of them that*  
*do well, 1 Pet. ii. 14.*

The only Caution here necessary to be us'd, is, that true Religion, in the promoting whereof the principal Care of good Princes is to be imployed, be always understood to consist; not in Matters of Notion, Speculation, and Dispute; not in Questions of Controversie, and uncertain Opinions; not in Matters of mere Humane and Temporary Authority; but in Obedience to the plain Precepts of the Gospel of Christ; in the great and Fundamental Duties of Piety towards God, Righteousness towards Men, and Temperance in the Government of ourselves; on the Practice of which, depends the Happiness of this Life, and of that which is to come: And that the Things to be principally discouraged by them, are Profaneness and Impiety, Unrighteousness and Iniquity, Debauchery and all Immorality.

Now as the *Nature and Derivation* of their Authority itself, so likewise *the End and Design* of all Government, obliges  
 good

good Princes to make the promoting of Religion and Virtue among the People, their principal and greatest Care. For the ultimate End and Design of all Government, is the Peace and Safety, the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, of the Society or Community united under such a Form of Government. Now 'tis manifest that nothing promotes this great End, so much as the Practice of Religion and true Virtue. For Virtue and a true Sense of Religion, obliges every Subject, every Member of the Society, in whom it is found: it obliges him *beforehand*, by a much stronger and securer Tie, to do all the same Things *freely and willingly, heartily and sincerely, in publick and in private*; which the best and wisest Laws can but compel those who want such a Sense of Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly and superficially, in publick Appearance only, and in the Sight of Men*. Religion therefore and true Virtue, if they prevailed in the World, would obtain the same End *fully and effectually*, which the best and wisest Laws can do but *in Part*: And Laws are made only to supply, in the best Manner they can, the Want of true Religion and Virtue among Men. *The Law is not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedi-*

H

ent,

Serm.  
IV.

Serm. ent, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for  
IV. the Unholy and the Profane. 1 Tim. i. 9.

For the same Reasons therefore, that 'tis very necessary for the Establishment of good Government in the World, that Men should be perpetually under the restraint of wise and wholesome *Laws*; for the same Reasons 'tis much more desirable, (and ought to be the great Aim and Design, the main and constant Endeavour of those in Power and Authority,) that *Religion and true Virtue* should universally prevail; the want of which only it is, that introduces the necessity of any coercive Laws or Penalties at all.

The *Means* by which good Princes are to promote the Practice of true Religion in the World, is not (as was before observed,) by putting Difficulties upon such as are weak or erroneous, in Matters of Speculation and Dispute, or in the Externals of Religion; but by securing the Foundation of Virtue and good Manners, upon which the Happiness of a Nation does most immediately depend; by maintaining the Honour of God, and keeping up a due Sense and Acknowledgment of his Providence, in the Minds of Men; by preserving Faithfulness and Truth, Integrity and Uncorruptness in the transacting and managing of all publick and private Affairs;



Affairs ; and by effectually discouraging all Immorality and Debauchery, which enfeeble the Spirits, and destroy the Power and Honour of a Nation. Serm. IV.

This is principally done by good *Example*, and by countenancing such as are desirous to follow it. For as the Sun diffuses Heat and Vigor, together with its Rays of Light, thro' the spacious Universe ; and insensibly promotes in all Things, by its powerful Influence, both Life and Growth, Motion and Action ; so the Example of a pious Prince, gives far greater countenance to Religion, than the strictest Laws ; encourages well-disposed Persons, and gives Life and Spirit to all pious Designs ; makes Vice and Immorality ashamed to show its Head ; or at least gives a Check to the more open Profaneness, of such as would publicly despise and throw Contempt upon Religion : Whereas, on the contrary, when the supreme Authority of a Nation, when the *Light of the World*, is it self *Darkness* ; how great must that *Darkness* be ? When the *Head is sick*, and the *whole Heart faint*, what Health and Soundness can the whole Body enjoy ?

Further : The *next* Means, by which good Princes may promote the interest of Religion, and the Practice of Virtue in the World ; next to the Incou-

Serm. ragement afforded by their own good Ex-

IV. ample; is by taking all fit Care, that Men

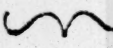
be not corrupted in their first Principles by Ignorance and gross Neglect, by carelessness and want of due Instruction. 'Tis recorded of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, as a most remarkable Part of his good Character, *That he sent to his Princes, and appointed Levites and Priests to teach in the Cities of Judah; and they had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the Cities of Judah, and taught the People.* 2 Chr. xvii. 7. And in this particular, as her present Majesty has exceeded the Piety even of the best and most religious Princes among her Predecessors, by considerably augmenting out of her own Revenue the maintenance of those who by divine Appointment are set apart to the Office of teaching and instructing Men in Matters of Religion; so, that charitable Disposition which seems daily to increase and spread in the Nation, of educating and instructing poor Children in the Principles of Religion, and in the Methods of Industry and honest Labour, it may reasonably be hoped will contribute in due Time to the Accomplishment of that Prophecy, that *the Earth shall be full of the*

*the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Seas.* Sermon.  
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2. 'Tis observed in the Text, that the *Effect* of Princes making it their chief Care to promote the Interest of true Religion and Virtue; is, *the Prosperity of themselves and their People. In every Work that he began, in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his Heart, and Prosper'd.* In the parallel Place, 2 Kings xviii. 7. The Word *Prospered* is thus more largely expressed; *the Lord was with him, and he Prospered, whithersoever he went forth.* We find in the Histories both of ancient and modern Times, that it has *sometimes indeed* happened otherwise; and that good and pious Princes have, for the Sins and Iniquities of their People, or for other secret and wise Reasons of Providence, been very unsuccessful in their Affairs, and fallen under great Calamities. But generally speaking, and in the usual Course of Providence, good and religious Princes have been blessed with Success, and great Prosperity. And of this, there are two obvious Reasons. *First*, The natural Tendency of the Thing it self. When Princes govern in the Fear of God, according to Law and Equity, being Mini-



Serm. iters of God to the People for good, and

IV.  having no other Interest but the Welfare of the Publick; *Mercy and Truth* will *preserve* their Persons, and their *Thrones* will be *upholden by Mercy*. Prov. xx. 28. When *Kings* become *nursing Fathers*, and *Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church of God; and the Example of their Virtue and Piety, renders them as conspicuous as their high Station: The Hearts of the Subjects will naturally be filled with Love and Affection, with Esteem and Veneration for them, as well as with a Sense of Duty towards them; and the Authority they are vested with, will be only such a paternal Care, in the Exercise of which they will justly be look'd upon and honoured as *Benefactors*. This is very elegantly express'd by *David* in the Place before-cited: where, after those Words of Instruction, *He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God*, he immediately adds, *And he shall be as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun arises, even a Morning without Clouds; as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth, by clear shining after Rain*. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. When, in Consequence of this the People obeys, not only for Fear, but also for Conscience-sake; and not for Conscience-sake only, but also out of Love

Love and Choice, in a Sense of their own Happiness: When they become unanimous in their Counsels and Designs; and every one, free from all Fear of any Incroachment upon their just Rights, their Liberties and Properties, discharges his Duty in his proper Station with Fidelity and Cheerfulness: This, in the Nature of Things, will establish a Government with Firmness and Security at Home; and spread Dread and Terror, upon its *Enemies abroad*. *Righteousness*, in the natural Tendency of the Thing itself, *will exalt a Nation*; as, on the contrary, *Sin* will be a *Reproach to any People*. But *Secondly*; the Providence of God, does moreover in a peculiar Manner most frequently concern itself, in blessing and prospering the Designs of pious Princes: *The King that faithfully judges the Poor, his Throne shall be established for ever*, Prov. xxix. 14. Notwithstanding the greatest natural Security from second Causes, yet, *except the Lord keep the City, the Watch-man Soldier may awake in vain*. Here therefore is the Establishment of the Throne of the Righteous; that it is under the sure protection of him, whose *Kingdom ruleth over all*. We read, 2 Chron. xvii. 10. (where is set down the good Character before-cited of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*;

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*dab; that the Lord was with him, and established the Kingdom in his Hand; and the fear of the Lord fell upon all the Kingdoms of the Lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no War against Jehoshaphat. And we of this Nation enjoy at this Day the happy Effects of the Blessings of Providence upon the pious Princess he has set over us; in giving her such signal Successes against the common Enemy, as we may reasonably hope will soon terminate in a safe, honourable, and lasting Peace.*

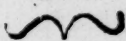
3. It remains in the *Third* and last Place, by Way of Application, to consider briefly what the *Duty* of Subjects is, who have the Happiness of living under such Governors, as follow the Example, and answer the Character given of good King *Hezekiah* in the Text.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. 'Tis their Duty to return Thanks to God, for the Benefits they enjoy under the happy Influence of a Pious Example and a wise Administration. 'Tis *St. Paul's* Exhortation, not only to *pray*, but also to *give Thanks*, for *Kings*, and for all that are in *Authority*; as being those under whose Protection we lead a quiet and peaceable Life, and by whose Care we are encouraged to live in all *Godliness and Honesty*. To be thankful to  
God,



God, whose Instruments and Vicegerents  
pious Governors are; (and who is therefore  
*in this Respect* in a more especial Manner  
the principal and supreme Cause of the  
Blessings conveyed to Us through their  
Hands;) is *rendring unto God the Things*  
*that are God's*, at the same Time that we  
make just Acknowledgment to *Cæsar* of  
what is due to *Cæsar*.

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And as we must not be unthankful to  
God, for Blessings received; so we must  
take Care, not to express our Joy and  
Gratitude in an improper Manner. We  
must declare our Thankfulness, not by  
unseemly Mirth, not in Rioting and De-  
bauchery; but by the sincere Practice of  
that Religion, the Preservation of which  
is the Conclusion of all our Prayers; and  
by Acts of steddy Affection to that Go-  
vernment, the Support of which is the  
Foundation of all our Hopes.

2dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under  
pious Governors, not only to acknow-  
ledge, that, *seeing by Them they injoy*  
*great Quietness, and that very worthy*  
*Deeds are done unto the Nation by Their*  
*Providence*, therefore they *accept it al-*  
*ways and in all Places with all Thank-*  
*fulness*; but they must show forth their  
real Gratitude, by Imitation of the Exam-  
ple set them from the Throne, and by a  
strict

Acts xxiv.

2.

Serm.

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strict Observation of the Laws against Profaneness, Debauchery and Immorality, so often recommended to them from thence, as the only certain Means of securing the Continuance of the Favour and Blessing of God, both upon them and their Prince. They must show forth their Gratitude by uniting all Hearts and Hands to promote, each in their proper Station, with all Diligence and Faithfulness, the Safety and Honour of the Government; by laying aside all private Animosities and Contentions among themselves; and by putting a stop (as much as in them lies) to all groundless Jealousies and unreasonable Suspicions, which tend to abate Mens Affection towards their Governors, and to bring Difficulties upon the Administration of publick Affairs.

3dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under all, and much more under pious and religious Governours, to offer up constantly for them, according to the Exhortation of the Apostle, *Supplications, Prayers and Intercessions*: That God would be pleased to give them Understanding and Knowledge, Strength and Ability, to *go in and out before a great People*; that he would enable them to bear the great Weight and Burden of Publick Business, assist them to undergo the manifold Difficulties



culties arising from the Uncertainties of all humane Affairs, and bless them in all their just Undertakings, with Prosperity and Success. God has hitherto blessed her present Majesty with unparallel'd Success, against the common Enemy of our Religion and Liberties: 'Tis our Duty to pray for a Continuation of the same Success, 'till the War abroad shall be brought to its desired Conclusion; and that, after that, we may be made a happy People at Home, by Peace and Unity and mutual Confidence among our selves; by a firm Establishment of the wise Constitution of our Government, for a *Succession* of many Generations; by a sincere Reformation of Manners among all Sorts and Degrees of Men; and an universal hearty Concern for the great and weightier Matters of Religion, more than for Things of Controversie and uncertain Dispute: That Humility, Love and Peaceableness, Righteousness and Equity, Diligence, Faithfulness and Truth, may possess the Hearts of Men of all Ranks and Conditions among us: That God would be pleased to inspire her Majesty with a discerning Heart, a wise and understanding Spirit; to bless her with Able Counsellors, with Righteous and Just Officers in all Places of Trust; with a Dutiful



Serm. tiful and obedient People: That *the Queen*  
IV. may rejoice in thy strength, O Lord, and  
be exceeding glad of thy Salvation: That  
thou mayest give her her *Hearts Desire*,  
and not deny her the Request of her  
Lips: That thou mayest prevent her with  
the Blessings of Goodness, and make her  
Honour great in thy Salvation, and  
crown her with Glory and great Wor-  
ship: That thou mayest give her a long  
Life here, and a longer and happier here-  
after, even for ever and ever.



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A

# SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. *James's*, *Westminster*,  
On *Tuesday*, *November 7*, 1710.

Being the Day of Thanksgiving for  
the Successes of the fore-going  
Campaign.

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PSAL. cxlv. 2.

*Every Day will I bless thee, and I will  
praise thy Name for ever and ever.*

**T**HE *particular* Occasion, upon Serm. V.  
which this Psalm was composed,  
is not known: But *in general*,  
that it was occasioned by some extraordinary Blessing, such as Success and Victory over powerful Enemies, or some other the like remarkable Interposition of Providence; is evident from the whole Course of the Psalm. For the Author of it, beginning with high Expressions of Joy and Thankfulness, (v. 1.) *I will extol thee,*  
O God,

Serm. *O God, my King, and will bless thy Name*

V. *for ever and ever; every Day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever; proceeds in the 4th Verse to declare, that the Ground of this his Joy and Thankfulness, was some mighty Act; some publick and eminent Interposition of Providence in his Behalf: One Generation, says he, shall praise thy Works to another, and shall declare thy mighty Acts; I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works: and Men shall speak of the Might of thy terrible Acts, and I will declare thy Greatness: And ver. 11. They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom, After which he goes on, from the consideration of past Mercies, to infer the reasonableness of Men's depending upon the same Providence for the continuance of his Protection in Time to come; if by a religious Behaviour they approve themselves worthy of his Care and Favour. Ver. 18, The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him faithfully: he will fulfil the Desire of them that fear him, he also will bear their Cry and will save them: The*  
*Lord*



*Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy. And then he concludes in the last Verse, with Expressions of Joy and Thanksgiving, as he began in the first; My Mouth shall speak the Praise of the Lord, and let all Flesh bless his holy Name for ever and ever.* Sermon V.

The Application of this Discourse of the Psalmist, to our *present* Occasion; is very obvious. God has done for *Us*, Things no less wonderful and remarkable, than for the *Jews* of old; and it becomes *Us* to praise him after the same Pattern, which the inspired Psalmist drew up for *their* Use. It becomes *Us every Day* to give Thanks unto him, and to praise his Name for ever and ever. It concerns us to take heed that we behave ourselves worthily, upon the Mercies we have receiv'd; that we be found in the Number of those that love him, and of those that call upon him in Faithfulness and Truth. And when *this* is our Case; then it will become us with humble Confidence, to depend upon his Promise for further Protection, that he who is *righteous in all his Ways*, and *holy in all his Works*, will continue to be *nigh unto us*; to preserve and support us; and be always ready to

Serm. to hear and *fulfil the Desire* of them that  
V. *fear and obey him.*

~~~~~ The Words of the Text consist of two  
Parts.

1st. A Declaration of that *Disposition of Mind*, which ought to be found in such Persons, as have received great Mercies from God ; And,

2^{dly}. An Account of the *outward Effects* of that pious Disposition, in Acts of publick Praise and Thanksgiving to God.

The former is a grateful and due *Sense* of God's Goodness. The latter, is the *Fruit and Consequence* of that just Sense of Things upon the Mind ; showing forth it self in external Acts of Worship, and in calling upon others to join with us in *publishing* the Praises of him, whose Power is so conspicuous in all great Events, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*.

But there is no need to insist separately upon each Part of this Distinction ; because, though the Things themselves are really *distinct*, yet they must always be supposed to *accompany* each other. For where the Mind is *inwardly* and deeply possessed with a just Sense of the Goodness of God, the *external Behaviour* cannot but of necessity be answerable to the *inward*

ward Sense and Disposition of the Mind : Sermon.

And where the *outward Actions* are full of proper Expressions of Gratitude, and professed Acknowledgments of the Divine Goodness ; though *God only* can *know* the Heart, yet *Men* must always charitably *suppose*; that the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the *Mind*, is agreeable to the Character of the *outward Action*. There is no need therefore for *Us* to distinguish, between *Thankfulness* as 'tis a Habit and Temper of the *Mind*, or as 'tis an *Expression* of that Temper in our *Behaviour and Actions*. For these Things ought always to go together; as in sincere Persons they really do ; And in the unsincere, where they do not, yet to the Eye of the World, which is all *We* can judge of, they must of Necessity appear to do so. *We* cannot, therefore, but treat of these Things as Synonymous; and, when we exhort Men to the Duty of Thankfulness, must always understand those *external Actions*, which are the *proper Expressions*, and ought always to be the *real Significations*, of a *grateful Mind*. Wherefore, without distinguishing between these two Branches, we may look upon the Text as one single Proposition ; and take the latter Part, as only an Explication of the former. *Every Day will I bless thee* ; or, as it is in the

Serm. the old Translation, *Every Day will I*
 V. *give Thanks unto thee; and praise thy*
 ~~~~~ *Name for ever and ever.*

That which is more particularly remarkable in the Words; is the Expression, *Every Day*. As if *every Day* of our Lives, were to be a Day of Thanksgiving; and our Expressions of Gratitude, as uninterrupted as our Breath. The meaning is; that, as we are directed by the Apostle to *Pray without ceasing*; and, by our Lord to petition our heavenly Father constantly for the continuance of our *daily* Food, in acknowledgment of our perpetual Dependence upon Providence, for the very Breath we draw, and for the Bread we *daily* eat: So we ought to be no less constantly and habitually thankful to God for the Benefits *we have received*, than we are importunate in our Petitions to him for the Things *we want*. In every Thing giving Thanks, as St. Paul expresses it, 1 *Thes.* v. 18. and *Eph.* v. 20. *Giving Thanks always for all Things unto God, even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There are some Things, which we enjoy in common with *all the Creatures* of God; Life and Breath, and the common Protection and Preservation of Providence. And for these, we are to join in that great  
 and

and universal Choir, which St. *John* in *Serm.*  
his Vision so elegantly describes, *Rev. v. V.*

13. and iv. 11. *Every Creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying ;-----Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour and Power ; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.* There are other Gifts, peculiar to *Men* ; Understanding and Knowledge, Reason and the Use of Speech, a Capacity of searching out and meditating upon the Works of God. And for these Faculties, we are to express our Gratitude, by employing them in his Service ; by promoting his Glory , and by so behaving our selves in the Exercise of our Dominion over the inferior Creation, that *all the Works* of God, over which he has made *Man* the Lord, may with *our Tongues* praise him, and magnify him for ever.

There are other Blessings peculiar to particular *Nations* : And for these we are to glorify God, by a particular thankful Acknowledgment, and by the proper Use of such respective Blessings.

If the Providence of God has planted us in a *fruitful* Country, and his Goodness successively crowns our Years with a



Serm.

V.

perpetual *Increase*; we are then to express our Thankfulness by Temperance and Sobriety, by Charity and Works of Mercy to the Poor, by taking great Care to prevent Luxury and Debauchery, Pride and Vanity, Sloth and Forgetfulness of God; which are the Vices too apt to spring up out of Prosperity and Plenty. *When thou hast eaten, and art full*, said *Moses* in his last and wise Exhortation to the *Israelites*; *then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good Land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his Commandments, and his Judgments and his Statutes, which I command thee this Day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly Houses, and dwelt therein; ----- and thy Silver and thy Gold, ----- and all that thou hast, is multiplied; then thine Heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Deut. viii. 10.*

If God has indued us with *Learning* and *Wisdom*, with Understanding and Knowledge, above other Nations of our Fellow-Creatures; whom we are too apt to despise under the Name of *Barbarians*; tyrannizing over their Weakness, and insulting over their Ignorance; not considering who it is that has taught any of

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*us more than the Beasts of the Field, and made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven :*

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The proper Way wherein our Gratitude should show forth it self for *these* Things,

Job xxxv. 11.

is in applying Learning to the Advantage of Religion, and to the promoting of the Glory of God in the World ; by increasing *real Knowledge*, and not perplexing it with *imaginary Subtilties* ; by discovering *Truth*, and not colouring over *Errors* ; by propagating what is *certain*, and not contending for *disputable Opinions*.

If God has vouchsafed us *the glorious Light of the Gospel*, and the *Knowledge of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ* ; while many other Nations lie yet in the Dark-ness of Heathenism, and have not the Knowledge of the Laws of God : The best and most acceptable Method of returning our Thanks for so inestimable a Blessing ; is, that we endeavour to propagate the Christian Knowledge with Simplicity to *Others* ; and that we take Care above all Things to obey the Truth *ourselves*, in the Love and in the Purity thereof.

If God has not only placed us under the Light of the Gospel, but blessed us also yet further with greater *Purity* of Religion, by a *Reformation* from the *gross*

Serm. *jest* Errors and Idolatrous Superstitions,  
 V. wherewith even the Christian World it-  
 self had been almost universally overspread,  
 thro' the Corruption of that *Mother of*  
*Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,*  
 which hath made all Nations to drink of  
 the Wine of her Fornication, and in whom  
 is found the Blood of the Prophets and  
 Saints, and of all that are slain upon the  
 Earth: If God, I say, has blessed us  
 with a Reformation from these grossest  
 of Corruptions; the most suitable Return  
 of Thankfulness for such an Advantage,  
 is to pursue the *Spirit and Design* of that  
 Reformation; and to take great Care, that  
 we be not deluded insensibly to fall back  
 again, and join in Affinity with the Peo-  
 ple of these Abominations; but that we  
 stedfastly take more and more heed, with-  
 out Regard to any *Human Authority* what-  
 soever, and without calling any Man Fa-  
 ther or Master upon Earth, to adhere to  
 the divine Authority of the *Scriptures* on-  
 ly, as the Adequate Rule of Faith and  
 Manners; which is the sole Foundation  
 of the *Protestant* Religion, and the only  
 effectual Means of preventing all *Diffe-*  
*rences* among those who sincerely desire  
 to understand and practise the Truth.

If God has preserved unto Us our *law-*  
*ful Liberties and Properties*, under a mild  
 and

Rev. xvii.  
 5, 14 viii.  
 18, 24.

Ezra ix.  
 14.

Mat. xxiii.  
 9.



and well-constituted Government; when almost all other Nations upon Earth, are subject to arbitrary and illegal Dominion; which is that Form of Government, where- with God threatned to punish the *Israel- ites* for their Rebellion against him, when he declared unto them by the Prophet *Samuel the Manner of the King that should reign over them*: Our Thankful- ness for the continuance of such a Blessing, can by no other Way be so properly ex- pressed, as by making it our chief Care to use that Liberty which we so justly boast of, and which we have thought worth the defending almost with infinite Blood and Treasure, so as not to abuse it to Licentiousness and Wantonness: To use our Liberty so, as not to run into the contrary Extreme of Lawlessness and Con- fusion; To use it so, as not to break through the Obligations of regular Go- vernment and legal Restraints.

*Lastly*, If God has crowned all our o- ther Blessings, with that which is the Se- curity and Preservation of them all; a constant Series of unparallell'd *Succeſs*, and *Victories* beyond Example great and complete, against the potentest Enemy that ever yet attempted to enslave the World; *What shall we render unto the Lord for these his Benefits*, and what Re-

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V.  
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1 Sam.  
viii. 9.



Serm.

V.

turns shall we make him for such a Blessing as this? The Answer to this Question, is of great Importance; and the serious Consideration of it, is that without which our religious Assemblies would be but mere Hypocrisie, and our Prayers no better than a mocking of God.

1<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, if we will make worthy Returns to God, for these his Benefits, in giving us such Victories and Successes; we must in the first Place be careful to make ourselves truly sensible, from *what Hand* these Blessings do *really come*. We must be fully persuaded, that 'tis God that gives Victory in the Day of Battle, and that Success is owing to the Protection of the Almighty; that 'tis he that *breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*. That which is apt to deceive Men in this Matter, is their observing Things to depend upon *Second Causes*, and to be brought about by the Operation of *Natural Agents*. But what are *Second Causes*, and what are *Natural Agents*, but mere *Instruments* in the Hand of him who *ruleth over all*? All other Things, excepting *Men* only who are free Agents, have no Pretence to be esteemed *Causes* in any Sense at all; but are meerly as *Instruments* in the Hand of the Workman. And by

by these Things, the Counsels and De-  
signs even of *Men* themselves, of the wis-  
est Men and of the strongest Forces, are  
perpetually over-ruled to quite different E-  
vents, than they intended or could pos-  
sibly foresee. So that the Issues of all  
great Actions, and the main Turns of all  
worldly Affairs, depend entirely upon such  
Accidents, as are wholly in the Hand of  
God to direct. Which Accidents, tho'  
they be indeed what we vulgarly call *Nat-  
ural Causes*, yet this is really nothing else  
but an impropriety of Speech; to call  
that a *Cause*, which, being Unintelligent,  
is in Truth nothing more than an *Instru-  
ment* in the Hand of him who is truly  
the efficient Cause. And this is evident-  
ly the Case, in all Unintelligent Natural  
Agents. Whatever *they* seem to effect,  
is not in reality done by *them*, but by the  
*Providence of God*. That the Sun *runs*  
its Course *every Day*, is no less strictly  
and properly the Hand of God, than that  
it *stood still one Day*: Nor is there any o-  
ther Ground, why the *one* is by all Men  
readily ascribed to God, and *the other*  
they vulgarly fancy is done naturally with-  
out him; but only this one foolish Reason,  
that what God does *once*, they see and ac-  
knowledge is done by *him*; but what he  
does always, they therefore think 'tis not  
be

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Serm. *he does it at all.* The Scripture, (and

V. Reason also,) teaches us more justly, to  
 ~~~~~ *acknowledge God in all our Ways*; and to  
 be sensible who it is, that, being the Au-
 thor and Director of Nature, and of all
 those Accidents which we can neither
 foresee nor prevent, does thereby dispose
 and order, as he pleases, the Events of
 all Humane Affairs. *There are many De-*
vices in Man's Heart; but the Counsel of
the Lord, that shall stand, Prov. xix. 21.

2dly. We must not only in a meer
Speculative Manner, be convinced that
 'tis the Hand of God which bringeth a-
 bout all great Events, and crowns us with
 Victory and Success; but we must so con-
 sider it and meditate upon it in a *Practi-*
cal Manner, as to be truly thankful to
 him for the Advantages we reap thereby.
 The *Jews* in *Moses's* Time *knew* very well
 who it was, that *made them ride on the*
high Places of the Earth, and---to suck
Honey out of the Rock; and Oyl out of
the flinty Rock; who it was, that *led them*
in the Wilderness like Sheep, and kept
them as the Apple of his Eye; that *suffer-*
ed no Man to do them wrong, but reprov-
ed even Kings for their Sake. Yet even
 of these very Persons, who *knew* all these
 Things so perfectly, and had seen them
 with their own Eyes; did that holy Man
 complain

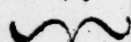
complain, *Deut. xxxii. 15.* that *Jeshurun* waxed fat and kicked; that he forsook the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation. King *Hezekiah*, knew very well who it was that gave him a Sign, and recover'd him when he was sick unto Death, and deliver'd him out of the Hand of the King of Babylon by a Miracle: Yet even of him, the Scripture complains, that he rendered not ^{2 Chron.} again, according to the Benefit done unto ^{xxxii. 25.} him; for his Heart was lifted up; therefore there was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Even so we also, how well soever we apprehend in a *Metaphysical and Speculative* Manner, that God is the Disposer of the Events of all Human Affairs; yet what are we the better, if it does not affect us *Morally*, in filling our *Hearts* with *Gratitude*, and our *Mouths* with *Praises*, and our *Lives* with Acts of *Obedience* to him, after all the great Things that he has done for us? This is the only Return, that frail and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governour of all Things. For our Goodness extendeth not ^{Job xxii.} to him; neither can Man be profitable unto God; as he that is wise, may be profitable unto himself. But Thankful and Obedient to him, we can be; and most inexcusable and base is our Ingratitude, if his

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Serm. his Mercies do not so affect us. Yet most

V.



prone is our corrupt Nature, to become thus forgetful of our supreme Benefactor: And the very *Frequency* of great and unexpected Blessings, is itself, to careless and profane Persons, an Occasion of neglecting those Things as common, which, if they had more rarely happened, would have been more carefully observed. In the Course of this great and bloody War, almost *every Campaign* has offered as much Matter of Thanksgiving, as at other Times the whole Series even of a successful War has been used to furnish. And for this very Reason, because we have been obliged to return Thanks *so often*, unthinking and careless Persons have little or no Disposition to be truly thankful and devout *at all*. The proper Remedy against this Evil, is to consider seriously and distinctly, what it is that we have hitherto been delivered from, by those Successes, for which we have so often and with so much Reason been commanded to return publick Thanks. The War, wherein we are now engaged, seems to be the last Struggle for the *two* Things, which alone are valuable in human Life; *Liberty*, and *Religion*: In opposition to *arbitrary Power*, which destroys all Property; and in opposition to *humane Authority and Infallibility*

bility sitting in the Seat of God, which is totally inconsistent with all true Religion. Had it pleased God to permit our Enemies to have been as successful against Us, as we have hitherto been victorious over them; we had long since been Slaves, deprived of all legal Right to our temporal Possessions; and, for our Religion, had been worshipping Stocks and Stones, and Souls of Men departed, instead of Him that made the Heavens and the Earth and the Sea, and all Things that are therein. Or, had Providence permitted us to have been deluded, with the Pretences of a false and deceitful Peace, the Effects of such an ill-grounded and insecure Agreement, might possibly have been much more fatal, than the continuance even of the bloodiest and most expensive War. And the growing Mischiefs of one disadvantageous Treaty, might have been more difficult to retrieve than the transient Miseries even of many unprosperous and unsuccessful Campaigns. For we have to deal with an Enemy, with whom no Peace is to be had longer, than we have Power to enforce it; An Enemy, whose Character is exactly given by the Prophet Daniel, *ch. viii. v. 23. A King of fierce Countenance,--- who shall destroy wonderfully;---and through his Policy also*

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Rev. xiv.



Serm. *also he shall cause Craft to prosper,---and*  
 V. *he shall magnifie himself in his Heart; and*  
 ~~~~~ *by Peace shall he destroy many.*

3dly. That our Thanksgiving may become truly acceptable; it must be *accompanied* with such *Circumstances*, and *followed* with such *Behaviour*, as may show the *Words* of our *Mouths* to be real Expressions of the *Thoughts* of our *Hearts*, and that our Praises proceed not *out of feigned Lips*. Our Joy must express itself, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Frenzy and Debauchery; but in Praises and Thanksgivings accompanied with Sobriety and Purity, with Modesty and Humility; such as becomes those who mean to honour God with Piety and sincere Devotion in the Practice of that Religion, the Preservation of which from being over-run with the Tyranny and Superstition of Popery, is one of the principal Grounds of our rejoicing for that Success wherewith God has hitherto blessed us. For it becomes us *Christians* to rejoice, not in *Ravage* and *Bloodshed*, not in the *Misery* and *Destruction* even of our Enemies themselves: It becomes us to rejoice, not upon the Increase of our *Power* for *Dominion's* Sake; not upon the enlarging our *Territories*, and aggrandizing the *Honour* of our *Arms*; but in being enabled

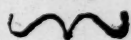
abled to rescue the oppress'd *Liberties* of Nations; to restore the common *Rights* of human Nature; and to secure that *Freedom of Religion*, in the denying of which consists the very Essence of *Antichristian* Iniquity. *All Nations*, after their Fashion, return their Thanks to the Almighty, for Victory and Success over their Enemies; and the greatest Tyrants and Oppressors of Mankind, pretend to praise God, whenever their Arms, by the Permission of Providence, and for the Punishment of the World, prevail over the Weakness of their neighbouring Nations: But these their *Thanksgivings* are *Profaneness*; and to presume to offer Praises to God, for the Increase of *Power* for Power's Sake, and for the setting up *arbitrary* and *tyrannical Dominion*, is no better than affronting of God, and making a Mockery of Religion. *Christians* are to desire, and to rejoice at the obtaining such Victories only, as tend to establish the *Rights* and *Properties* of Mankind, and the common *Liberties* of Nations: And our Joy must express itself in such a Manner, and be attended with such consequent Behaviour as is becoming the Purity of the Gospel of Christ. For, as the *Wisdom* which is from above, so the Joy also of those who are possess'd of that Wisdom, is, *first pure,*
then

Serm. *then peaceable, gentle and easy to be in-*
 V. *treated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.*
 James iii. It becomes us to rejoice for Success in
 17. *War* for no other Reason, but because 'tis
 the necessary and only Means of arriving
 at a safe and secure *Peace*. With which
 Blessing when it shall please God to com-
 plete and crown all our past Successes;
 then will it highly behove us to approve
 our selves indeed the *Children of Peace*,
 by laying aside all those unchristian *Di-*
visions and Animosities among our selves,
 which are kept up by mutual Accusations,
 full (as we may reasonably hope) of more
Uncharitableness than *Truth*. The Means
 of causing all which to be forgotten, is
 first to *unite* heartily in pursuing the
 Things wherein we all agree; and then
 to wait with *Charity* in those wherein we
 differ, 'till even in *these* also God shall re-
veal the Truth unto us. Let us consider,
 that *Force and Violence*, without Regard
 to Right and Equity, are the Means by
 which our *Adversaries* propagate their
Power, and (as they are pleas'd to call it)
 their *Religion* also: For which Reason
 principally, their *Power* is a *publick Ene-*
my to Mankind, and their *Religion* pro-
 perly *Antichristian*. But we profess to
 make *War*, not for the Sake of *Conquest*,
 but only to obtain to our selves a secure
Peace

Peace. And our Religion teaches us, as to *desire* the *publick*, so to *maintain* (as far as possible) *private* Peace also among ourselves; by mutual Love, Charity and Good-will; as becomes those who profess the *Gospel of Peace*.

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Let us therefore endeavour to *understand* rightly, the full *Nature and Design* of the Religion we *profess*. Which consists mainly in these *two* Things. 1st, That the *Scripture* (as I before observ'd) is the *only Rule* of our *Faith*. Which, if duly attended to, would speedily put an End to all *Differences* and *Contentions*, among those who consider what they mean when they make *that Profession*. And 2^{dly}, That the *Commandments of God* are infinitely of more Importance, than any *speculative Notions* or *Opinions* of Men. Which Thing, if seriously consider'd, would as effectually regulate our *Practice* in the Conduct of *Life*, as the adhering stedfastly to the only true Rule of *Faith*, would at once cut off all *Disputes* in the Matter of our *Belief*. Our *Lusts* and *Follies*, our *Debauchery* and *Profaneness*, our unreasonable and unchristian *Uncharitableness* and *Divisions* among *our selves*; are worse and more dangerous *Enemies*, than those we fight with *abroad*. And unless we speedily reform these Abuses,

K

and

Serm. and cease to provoke God by the continu'd Corruption of our Manners; the
V. same Divine Providence, which has hitherto wonderfully fought for us against the potentest Monarch that ever yet aim'd at the Empire of the World; can as easily, if he pleases, turn back our Successes speedily to our entire Destruction; and in a Moment bring upon us, after all our Victories, the very same *Event* as would have been the Effect of a continually unsuccessful *War*; at the Time when we are just flattering ourselves with the Hopes of being put into secure Possession, of the Blessings of a safe and lasting *Peace*.



The Government of Passion.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

At St. James's Chapel, on Sunday
the 7th of January, 1710-11.

Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTIES Special Command.

EPHES. iv. 26.

Be ye Angry, and Sin not.

SINCE in the ordinary Conduct of human Life, and in the common Affairs of the World, Natural Wisdom teaches us, that the only ſure and effectual Means of avoiding great Evils, is the preventing of ſmall ones; and that the Beginnings of Miſchief are much more eaſily prevented, than the Progreſs of them

Serm.
VI.

Serm. them stopped, or the *Consequences* of them
VI. remedied :

~~~~~ Since under the Improvements of *Philosophy* in the heathen World, the Principal and most useful Precepts given Men for the Government of their Passions, was *to* watch continually, and guard themselves against the *first Emotions* of Passion rising up in Opposition to Reason; *to* stop the first breaking out of a silent Stream, which by Neglect would swell into an overflowing Torrent; *to* extinguish the first Spark of a scarce discernable Fire, which by Degrees would prevail into a destroying Conflagration :

Since by the still purer and more refined Precepts of the *Doctrine of Christ*, we are obliged to govern even our very *Thoughts* and *Desires* ; to pray against the *Temptations* and *first Occasions* of Sin ; to lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, by *suppressing* all corrupt *Affections*, by *restraining* all inordinate *Appetites*, by *moderating* and keeping even a strict Hand over *innocent Inclinations* ; by *plucking out*, if Need be, even a *right Eye*, and *cutting off a right Hand* :

Since these Things ( I say ) are so ; it may well seem strange, to any one that is not versed in the *Jewish* Manner of speaking, how St. *Paul* should come to express

press himself after such a Sort, as if he intended to indulge Men in letting loose the Reins to their Passions, as far as was consistent with Innocency; and thought it safe to permit Men to allow themselves in the Gratification of their Anger, provided they did but just keep themselves without the Borders of Sin: *Be ye Angry, and Sin not.* As if the Bounds between what is excusable and criminal, were marked with so distinct a limit, that Men might be trusted to discern with Ease, *when* they were at the utmost Extent of their lawful Liberty; or that it could be supposed Men had so perfect a Command of themselves, as to be able to stop suddenly at an appointed Mark in a swift Career, and say (when they please) to their Passion, *hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.*

Our Saviour, in his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, makes it in almost every Instance, his peculiar Improvement of Moral Obligations under the Gospel, to warn Men against the *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards those Sins, whereof only the gross *Acts* were forbidden under the Law.

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of* Mat. v. 27. *old Time, thou shalt not commit Adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, has already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.*



Serm. *Ye have heard it has been said by them of*

VI. *old, thou shalt not forswear thyself: But I say unto you, swear not at all. Ye have heard it has been said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil. Ye have heard it has been said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, love your Enemies. And in the Case before us, of Wrath and Anger: Ye have heard, says he, that it has been said by them of old Time, thou shalt not kill: But I say unto you, that whosoever is Angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment; --- and whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire. Nay, in some of the antientest Copies of this Gospel, those Words of Restriction, (without Cause,) whosoever shall be Angry without a Cause, are omitted; and the Declaration is made in the most general Terms. Whosoever is angry with his Brother, shall be in danger of the Judgment: Men being apt enough of themselves, to put in such Restrictions as may be equitably presumed; and there being no need, in the Body of the Law itself, to express such excepted Cases or such Limitations, to which in all Reason and Equity, it may, however, be supposed the Law cannot extend. This makes*



makes it still the more worthy of enquiry, whence it might come to pass, that St. Paul expresses himself upon this Subject in such a Manner, as may seem to give some *Indulgence* to such *Degrees* of Passion as are not directly sinful; (*Be ye angry, and sin not*;) when yet both by Experience and the Reason of Things, and by our Saviour's express Caution in all Matters of this Nature, 'tis evident that Passions indulged to the utmost Bounds of Innocency, are much harder to restrain from entering into sinful Degrees, than it was to prevent their Beginnings or arising at first.

Now the true Account of this Matter, seems plainly to be this. The Words, *Be ye Angry*, are not a Permission, as they may seem to be when taken alone; but, according to the Nature and Use of the *Jewish* Language, they are Part of a *Single* Proposition with those that follow. *Be ye Angry, and Sin not*; that is, *Take heed and beware of sinful Anger. Indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin.* Or, *If at any Time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.* For such is the Idiom of the *Jewish* Language; to express that in *two* distinct Propositions, which ought *so* to be understood, as if they were put in *one*. There

Serm. are many other Texts in Scripture, which  
 VI. will confirm this Interpretation; and the  
 comparing them with this, will reciprocally afford much Light, towards the true Understanding of several of those Passages.

In the old Testament; *Mal. i. 2, 3.* Jacob have I loved, saith God, and Esau have I hated. The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as one; Jacob have I loved, more than Esau. For, God did not intend to express Hatred towards Esau, but only to love Jacob comparatively, with a great Love. *Nahum iii. 14.* Fortify strong holds,---there---shall the Sword cut thee off: The Intention is not to exhort Nineveh to fortify herself; but to declare, how much soever she does fortify her self, yet shall the Sword cut her off. And so *Isai. viii. 9.* Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in Pieces. i. e. How much soever ye strengthen your selves, yet shall ye be broken. Again; *Ecclus. xxx. 9.* Cocker thy Child, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he will bring thee to Heaviness: The Proposition is but one; if thou indulge thy Child, he will bring thee to Sorrow. *Jer. vii. 22.* I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the Day that I brought them out of



of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt- Offerings or Sacrifices; but this Thing commanded I them, saying, obey my Voice: Sermon VI.

The two Parts of this Sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-Offerings *at all*; (for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most *express* Words in the Law;) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist* upon Burnt-Offerings *so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the Moral Law. There is a like Expression, *Hos. vi. 6. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*: The meaning is not, that God did *not* require Sacrifice; but that he desired Mercy, *rather* than Sacrifice; and (as it follows in the very next Words) *the Knowledge of the Lord, more than Burnt-Offerings*. And thus also must be understood that Passage in *Ezekiel Chap. xx. 25. I gave them also Statutes that were not good, and Judgments by which they should not live*: The meaning is *not*, evil Statutes; God forbid: But Statutes, which *comparatively* were not good; and Judgments which were not *so* profitable, as moral ones, to cause them to live.

In the *new* Testament, the same Manner of Expression, agreeable to the Nature of the *Jewish* Language, is likewise frequently



Serm. frequently used; and it is necessary to be

VI. taken Notice of, in order to the true understanding of several Passages. *I am not sent*, saith our Saviour himself, discoursing with the Woman of *Canaan*, but to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*; St. Mat. xv. 24. His Meaning is not absolute, (as might seem from the first Part of the Sentence,) that he was *not sent at all* to any others than the *Jews* only; but that he was not sent so *soon*, so *immediately*, so *principally*; his Mission was not to be made known so *early*, to any other Nation, as to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*. For that he *was* also, in process of *Time*, to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, as well as to be the Glory of his People *Israel*, the Scripture of the Prophets expressly enough declared; and our Saviour himself in this very Place sufficiently intimates, when immediately after that seeming Refusal, yet he effectually granted this Stranger's Request, by healing the Infirmary of her Daughter. And in his Instructions to his Disciples, chap. x. 5. he speaks with less Obscurity; *Go not into the Way of the Gentiles;-----but go rather to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*. Which afterwards was still more clearly expressed by the Apostles, *Acts* xiii. 46. *It was necessary that the Word of God should*

should first be spoken to the Jews; but afterwards to the Gentiles. But, not to mention any other Places, there is one Expression of St. Paul, of this Nature, more remarkable to the present Purpose, than any other Passage in the whole Scripture. In the vi<sup>th</sup> Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, at the 17th Verse; *God be thanked, saith he, that ye were the Servants of Sin: But ye have obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered you.* God be thanked, that ye were the *Servants of Sin*: It may seem a very strange and unusual Expression, according to the Manner of speaking in modern Languages: But in the Jewish Idiom it was very intelligible, that the two Parts of the Sentence should be taken as one; *God be thanked, for that ye, who once were the Servants of Sin, have since obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered you.*

And thus likewise in the Words of the Text; *Be ye Angry, and Sin not.* That is, *Take heed and beware of sinful Anger; indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin; or, if at any Time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.*

It is the same Caution, as in the Government of all other Passions or Desires.

So

Serm.

VI.

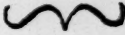


Serm. So *use* the World, as not *abusing* it; So

VI. *rejoice*, as though ye *rejoiced not*; So  
 weep, as those that *wept not*; So *be angry*,  
 as that ye *Sin not*. The meaning of the  
 Words, being thus explain'd: That which  
 remains, is, *1st*, that I endeavour, in a  
 practical manner, to represent unto you,  
 what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is,  
 which must be charged as Sinful. And  
*2dly*, that I briefly set before you some of  
 the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of al-  
 lowing our Passion to arise to such a sinful  
 Degree.

Before I enter upon which Heads, it  
 may be proper to premise two Things.  
*1st*, That what shall be said concerning the  
 Nature of *Anger* in particular, may with  
 little Variation be easily applied in gene-  
 ral to the Government of *all other* Passi-  
 ons whatsoever. So that though the pre-  
 sent Subject of my Discourse be *particu-  
 lar*, yet, by serious Meditation, it may  
 without Difficulty be made *universally* use-  
 ful, towards regulating the Conduct of  
 human Life. And *2dly*, That those Things  
 which Scholastick Writers upon this Sub-  
 ject, have made burdensom to the Memo-  
 ry, and intricate to the Understanding, by  
 numerous Definitions, and more nice than  
 necessary Distinctions; I shall endeavour  
 to reduce under one single Head, that,  
 what to Persons of all *Capacities* is their  
 Duty

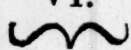


Duty to *practise*, may, without affording Sermon.  
Matter for Dispute or Subtilty, be by all VI.  
Persons equally *understood*. 

1. These Things being premised; I proceed *1<sup>st</sup>* to enquire, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And this will best be understood, by considering briefly what the Nature and Use of our Passions is, and for what Intent they were implanted in us by our all-wise Creator.

Where *Reason* and Understanding are *perfect*; there is no Room for any *Passion* or *Commotion*. And therefore in the most perfect Being, there is *no* Passion. In *God*, there is, properly speaking, neither Anger nor Complacency, neither Love nor Hatred, neither Joy nor Sorrow. In Him, there is no such Thing as Desire or Aversion; no such Commotion, as either Hope or Fear. But his Actions are determined always by perfect and unmixed Reason, by eternal and unchangeable Equity; which, in the supreme Mind, is an uninterrupted Calmness, like the Serenity of the highest Heavens. For, though the Scripture does indeed represent to *Us* the Divine Actions, as proceeding from Passions like to ours; yet this is *not* representing them what they are really in *him*, but only in Condescension to the Weakness

Serm. Weakness of *our* Apprehensions, or with

VI.  Regard to their Effects upon *Us*. And as, in the same Scripture, *Hands* and *Feet* and *Eyes* are figuratively ascribed to him, who, in reality, without Shape or Figure is in all Places every where alike present; so by the like *Analogy only* it is, that to God are sometimes ascribed *Passions*, for which there is no Place in a Mind where Reason and Understanding are perfect.

On the contrary, where there is *no Reason* nor proper Understanding *at all*; as in Creatures inferior to *Us*; there, *Passions and Appetites* are the *only* Springs of Action; and by *them* are *irrational Creatures* naturally and unavoidably directed.

*Men*, who (like *Beasts*) are formed out of the *Dust of the Earth*, and yet (like *Angels*) made *after the Image of God*; are of a *middle* Nature between these two States, between perfect *Reason* and mere irrational *Appetites*: Being indued with *Appetites and Passions*, to *excite* and stir them up to Action, where their bare abstract *Understanding* would leave them too *remiss*; and at the same Time indued with *Reason* also, to govern and *restrain* themselves, where *mere Appetites and Passions* would hurry them on to Things exorbitant and unreasonable. Herein therefore particularly lies the principal  
Duty



Duty of *Man*; in keeping his Passions subject to Reason, and in governing his Appetites by that Understanding, where-  
with God has distinguished him from the inferior Creation.

Serm. VI.  
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The *Affections* and *Passions* are not in themselves *Evil*, (as some of the Antient Philosophers vainly imagined;) but were implanted in us by the wise Author of all Things, for excellent Ends and very useful Purposes: That we, whose mixt Nature of Body and Spirit, would otherwise have made us too *remiss*, in pursuing the Ends to which bare abstract Reason directed us; might by the Affections and Passions, under the Regulation of Reason, and subservient to it, *i. e.* by reasonable Fears and Hopes, by Love or Hatred, by Anger or Complacency, be pushed on and *excited* to be more earnest and vigorous, more constant and diligent in all those Actions of Life, which Reason *directs*, and the Affections *execute*.

But now, when the Passions, instead of *obeying* Reason, over-rule and govern it; when they prevail *against* Reason, so as to put Men upon doing Things which the Reason of their Minds at the same Time forbids; or, (which is much the same Thing,) when they become so violent as to abridge Men of their Liberty, and put  
them



Serm. them *beside* their Reason; so as to leave

VI. them no Room or Time to judge, whether the Thing they are doing be reasonable or no; *then* it is, that the Passions become truly Sinful. And *Man*, who when *Reason* governs him, is the Image of *God*; degenerates, by the Dominion of *Passion*, even below the Nature of a *Beast*. For those inferior Creatures, when they obey their Appetites, follow their *Nature*: But the Nature of *Man*, is to obey a higher Principle, even *Reason* and the *Law of God*; to which, he who is governed by *Passion*, is not Subject, neither indeed can be; and therefore degenerates below his proper Nature. Which is a Folly, whereof inferior Beings are not Guilty.

From hence it becomes very evident, (which was the *first* Thing proposed,) what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that *Anger* is, which must be charged as Sinful: Namely, that it is *then* such, when it either puts Men *besides* the Use of their Reason, or upon acting in any sort *contrary* to it.

The Rule is *one*, and may without Difficulty be universally understood by *all* Men; But the Application is *infinite*, and must be made by *every one* for his own *Particular*. Every Person knows, when  
he

he considers seriously with himself; that his Anger becomes *then* a sinful Passion, when it is stirred up *without just Cause*, or upon *any Cause* vents itself in *indecent Effects*; when it spoils his Temper by *frequent Returns*, or by its *Violence* exposes him to unseemly *Transports*, or by † its *Continuance* degenerates into Hatred and Malice, when its *Height* is disproportionate to the *Occasion* that raised it, or unbecoming the *Character* of the Person provoked; or the *Circumstances* be in any wise contrary to right Reason and Religion. Which Cases, though they are indeed *infinitely various*, and therefore cannot be expressed in any Methodical Direction; yet because the Rule (as was said) is but *one* and unchangeably the same, therefore the Application in Practice is always *Easy*: *Easy* (I mean) *to be understood*, that a Man is *then* always to look upon his Passion as Sinful, when it either puts him *beside* the Use of his Reason, or upon acting any Thing *contrary* to it: But not always so *Easy* to be *Practised*: Because habitual Passions, are very apt to surprise Men; and will not be prevented, but by a *constant Guard*. Yet, because 'tis a *necessary Duty*, so to prevent and

† *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*: The Words immediately following the Text.



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VI.

guard against them ; therefore in order to persuade Men to set about the Practice of what is so indispensable and of so great Importance, 'tis proper that I proceed now in the

II. *Second Place*, to consider some of the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of allowing our Passions to prevail, in any of the forementioned *Kinds* or *Degrees*.

And here we cannot but take Notice, that even the *Heathen* Moralists themselves, have filled their Discourses with Arguments against irregular and disorderly Passions; drawn from the *Indecency* and *Unseemliness* of the *Thing it self*; from the *Shame and Indignity*, of a *reasonable Creature's* being subject to such *unreasonable Slavery*; from the *Uneasiness* of it, to *ourselves*; from the *Injuriousness* of it, to *Others*; and from many other Considerations, which prove a Man, who is governed by his Passion, to be incapable even of true *Philosophy*, incapable of coming up to so much as the moral Improvements even of a wise *Heathen*.

And the *Scripture* itself sometimes makes use of such *Natural Arguments*. From the *Folly* of the *Thing it self*, Eccles. vii. 9. *Be not hasty in thy Spirit to be Angry; For Anger resteth in the Bosom of Fools.* Prov. xii. 16. *A Fool's Wrath is presently known, but a prudent Man covereth*



vereth Shame; and chap. xiv. ver. 17, 29. Serm. VI.  
*He that is slow to Wrath, is of great Understanding; but he that is soon Angry, dealeth Foolishly; and he that is hasty of Spirit, exalteth Folly.* Again, from the Contempt it draws upon Men, who are observed to be guilty of this Weakness; Prov. xxv. 28. *He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls.* From the frequent Mischiefs and Damages it brings upon them; Prov. xix. 19. *A Man of great Wrath, shall suffer Punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again:* And Job v. 2. *Wrath killeth the foolish Man, and Envy slayeth the silly one.* Also, from the natural Excellency of the contrary Practice; Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.*

But to us Christians, there are still higher Arguments to convince us of the Mischiefe of being governed by our Passions; and to persuade us of the Necessity, of restraining them within due Bounds. For Us, to indulge our Passions; is to deprive our selves wholly of that Temper, that Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is the peculiar Character and Obligation of a Christian. If a Philosopher, if a wise Heathen, upon the com-

Serm. mon Principles of Reason and Morality;  
VI. if a *Man*, upon the bare Consideration of

the Dignity of his *Nature* above the Beasts that perish; is under Obligation to subdue his Appetites and Passions to Reason: How much more is a *Christian* bound, to keep himself still under stricter and more severe Restraints?

For when a *Christian* indulges his Passion, let him consider *who* it is, that acts so unworthily, and behaves himself so unseemly. A Man indued with *Reason* and Understanding: A Man, whose Reason is *improved*, not by *Philosophy* only, but moreover by the Knowledge of the *revealed Will* of God: A Man, for whom *Christ* dyed; to whom *God* has been freely reconciled, and, out of mere Mercy and undeserved Compassion, vouchsafed to turn away his Anger from him.

And against *whom* does this Person direct the Violence of his Passion? Against a *Man* like himself; against his *Friend* or his *Brother*, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh; one for *whom* *Christ* dyed as well as for *himself*, and by his own Blood redeem'd them *Both* from Death.

And *what* is it *for*, that one Christian Man, is fiercely angry against another? Perhaps for a *careless Word*, for an *undesign'd Provocation*, for a *difference in Opinion*; possibly for retaining a good Conscience



science, and not daring to do what the other expects of him; at most, for some slight and trivial *Offence*; for not being able to repay him his hundred *Pence*, when God has forgiven them both their ten thousand *Talents*.

Not that one Christian may not, in a just and legal Manner, *compel* another to do what is right and equitable: Much less that Superiors should not by their Authority *oblige* Inferiors, to perform the proper Duties of their respective Stations: But that in these, and all other Cases, *Religion and Equity* be the *Ground*; and *Reason*, not *Passion*, the *Measure* of the *Compulsion*.

If any Thing in the World could make exorbitant *Passion* excusable; it should seem to be when *Vice* is the Object of the Displeasure; and Concern for the *Honour of God*, the Cause of the Commotion. Nevertheless, even in *this* Case, our Saviour himself, when he was not only *reviled*, but was reviled also with *Blasphemy* against God himself; yet *reviled not again*. And *Michael the Archangel*, when contending with the Devil, yet did not bring against him a railing *Accusation*, but said, *the Lord rebuke thee*; Jude ix. And the Scripture accordingly directs, that a *Servant of God must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient*;



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VII.

*tient; in Meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth. For the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, St. Jam. iii. 17. And St. Paul exhorts, Eph. iv. 31. Let all Bitterness and Wrath and Anger and Clamor and Evil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.*

There is a remarkable History to this Purpose in the Book of *Jonah*; where, upon God's repenting to execute his Threatnings upon *Nineveh*, *Jonah* was displeased at it exceedingly, and he was very Angry; and persisted in it, that he did well to be angry, even unto Death. But God reprov'd him by the Similitude of a Gourd, at which *Jonah* was grieved when it perished suddenly; and the Lord said unto him, *Thou hadst Pity on the Gourd, which came up in a Night, and perished in a Night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great City?*

When once a Man, whatever the Occasion be, gives himself up to his *Passion*; he is then out of the Use of his *Reason*, and he can never tell to what Degree of  
Unrea-

Unreasonableness he may be pusht on. *An* Sermon.  
*angry Man stirreth up strife, and a furi-* VI.  
*ous Person will abound in transgression.* ~~~~~

Prov. xxix. 22. As *Cain's causeless* Displeasure against his Brother, increased by Degrees beyond Limit, 'till it ended in Murder, so Passion let loose, even upon the most *just Provocation*, is like a Torrent breaking thro' a Bank; which will hardly be prevented from swelling 'till it leads us into Sin. *My beloved*, saith St. James, *let every Man be---slow to Wrath; for the Wrath of Man*, (even though it be against what is *Evil*;) yet *worketh not the righteousness of God*.

The Cause of such disorderly Passions, is always *Carelesness* and want of *Seriousness*: The Remedy is, *Consideration*, *Attention*, and frequent *Examination* of a Man's self; so as to keep a constant Guard and Watchfulness over his Spirit. To be able *perfectly* to cure his Temper, to conquer himself *wholly*, and change his Disposition; is what no one ought to expect in *this World*; nor to be disappointed or discouraged, if he finds even the *moderating it* to be a Work of Difficulty and Time. But to *endeavour* to amend it *daily*, is his indispensable Duty. And he who considers how easily and suddenly he can restrain himself, at the coming in of a *Superiour* whom he reveres among



Serm. *Men*; must not pretend it impossible for  
 VI. him to govern his Passions, with the  
 Thoughts of the perpetual Presence of  
 God.

There have been some, who have al-  
 leged in Excuse for themselves, that Pas-  
 sage in Scripture, that the Apostles them-  
 selves were *Men of like Passions with us*.  
 Acts xiv. 15. But the Intent of that Pas-  
 sage is much misunderstood, through an  
 improper Translation. For the Intention  
 of St. Paul and Barnabas speaking in that  
 Manner to the Men of *Lystra*, was not  
 to say that they were Men of *like Passions*,  
 in the Sense we now usually understand the  
 Word; but that they were Men of *like*  
*Infirmities, mortal Men* like themselves,  
 subject to *Diseases, Casualties* and *Death*;  
 and therefore, not to be worshipped as  
 Gods. So *Jam. v. 17. Elias was a Man*  
*subject to like Passions as we are*: The  
 meaning is not, that he was a *passionate*,  
 but that he was a *mortal Man* like one of  
 us, and yet interceded effectually with  
 God. But if the meaning was literal, that  
 the Apostles and Prophets had the same  
*Passions with Us*, (as undoubtedly they na-  
 turally had,) yet this is no Excuse for *Us*,  
 unless, like *them*, we govern them also by  
 the Rules of Reason and Religion. *Be ye*  
*Angry, and Sin not. Now unto the only*  
*wise God, &c.*

A S E R -



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# SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. *James's Westminster*, Decemb. 16, 1720. being the Day of *Fasting and Humiliation*, for beseeching God to preserve us from the *Plague*.

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ISAIAH xxvi. 9. latter Part.

*When thy Judgments are in the Earth,  
the Inhabitants of the World will learn  
Righteousness.*

BESIDES the general Evidences of the Being and Providence of God which appear in the Fabrick of the Universe, in the Contrivance and wise Disposition of all the Works of Nature, and in the great Providential Events which to the several Nations of the Earth declare in some Degree his Government over Mankind: I say, Besides these *general* Evidences of Providence, the Scripture has moreover given us a *particular* and standing

Serm. VII.

Serm. standing Example of it, in the History of  
VII. the *Jewish* Nation. *That People*, in a *singular* Manner, did God deliver out of the *Egyptian* Bondage, by Signs and Wonders and mighty Works. *Them* did he lead thro' the Wilderness like a Flock of Sheep, and with an out-stretched Arm brought them through innumerable Dangers to the Borders of his promised Land. Before *them* did he drive out many Potent People, and planted them in the room of those idolatrous Nations. Upon *them*, when they corrupted themselves and departed from his Ways, did he frequently inflict very severe Judgments, by Way of exemplary Correction, raising them up new Enemies round about them: And when they returned unto him again, he forgave their Misdeeds, and destroyed them not, but delivered them again out of the Hands of their Enemies. The *Effects* these various Dispensations of Providence had upon *particular Persons* among that People, were very different, according to the Temper and Disposition of the Persons. Those of them, who were very corrupt; who loved the idolatrous Rites of the Nations that surrounded them, and the Debaucheries that attended those idolatrous Practices; became more and more corrupt in the Times of *Prosperity*, and in the Days of *Adversity* they hardened their

their Hearts against God. When the *Wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them, and smote down the chosen Men that were in Israel: For all this they sinned yet more, and believed not his wondrous Works*, Psal. lxxviii. 32. And when God worked for them miraculous *Deliverances*, still they kept not the *Covenant of God*, and would not walk in his *Law*: But forgot what he had done, and the wonderful Works that he had shewed for them, Ver. 12. The mighty Signs and Wonders they continually saw, grew familiar unto them; and by Degrees made no more Impression upon them, than the Works of Nature, which are indeed continual Miracles, make now upon Atheistical and profane Minds. But others amongst them, observed the Works of God, and the Dispensations of his Providence, and laid up all these Things in their Minds; and were influenced thereby to obey his Commandments, and to serve him with an upright Heart. And some, who in the Days of Prosperity forgot themselves, and were carried away with the Stream of a degenerate and corrupt World; yet, when the Judgments of God appeared, their Heart was tender, and their Conscience smote them, and they returned and repented of their evil Ways, and amended their Lives, and gave glory to

Serm.

VII.



Serm. to God. *Ver. 5. He bringeth down them*

VII. *that dwell on high; the lofty City he lay-  
eth it low, even to the Ground, he bring-  
eth it even to the Dust.----In the Way of  
thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited  
for thee; the Desire of our Soul is to thy  
Name, and to the Remembrance of thee.  
With my Soul have I desired thee in the  
Night, yea, with my Spirit within me  
will I seek thee early. For when thy  
Judgments are in the Earth, the Inha-  
bitants of the World will learn Righteous-  
ness.*

The *Doctrinal Proposition* plainly con-  
tained in the Words, and which will there-  
fore be the Subject of the following Dis-  
course, is this: That the Design and the  
proper Effect of the Judgments of God in  
this World, is to awaken Sinners, and to  
bring them by Repentance to the Prac-  
tice of Righteousness. *When thy Judg-  
ments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants  
of the World will learn Righteousness.*

*Righteousness* is the Practice of that  
which is in itself Right and Fit to be done.  
And, were there no Rewards or Punish-  
ments annexed either by God or Man, o-  
ther than what essentially arise from the  
good or evil Actions themselves; yet that  
which is Right, would still always be  
reasonable to be done; and the Nature of  
Wickedness would be still always what it  
is.

is. Upon this Ground it is, that *God*,  
who is infinitely above all Hope or Fear ;  
to whose Happiness nothing can be added,  
and nothing diminished from it, yet essentially loves Righteousness and Truth, and steddily and unalterably chooses always to do what is Just and Good. *Inferiour* rational Beings, *so far* as they are influenced by *Reason*, do the same ; and see, and esteem, and judge of Things, as they really are. But *all finite Beings* are, in their several Proportions and Degrees, *fallible*. And the Reason which is in *Men*, is Weak ; liable to be darkened by *Ignorance*, to be blinded by *Prejudices*, to be seduced by *Appetites*, to be over-ruled by *Passions* and unreasonable *Affections*. These are the Springs of Wickedness among Men. To prevent the ill Effects whereof God has been pleased to *add Weight* on the Side of Virtue and Righteousness, by the Sanction of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. The *Rewards* which God has annexed to the Practice of Virtue, either in this Life or the next, are of such a Nature ; that the having *Regard to those Rewards*, does not destroy the intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, or make the Practice of it at all *mercenary* ; because, the Idea of God being the Notion of a Being infinitely Holy, Righteous and Good ; the Love of *him*, and the Desire of continuing in *his Favour*  
and

Serm.

VII.



Serm. and of being *Blessed* by *him*, is either in  
VII. effect the same Thing, or at least is co-  
incident with, the Love of Virtue and  
Goodness itself. *Punishments* likewise,  
when considered as coming from *God*, are  
of such a Nature, that good Actions arising  
from the *Fear* of *his* Displeasure, do not  
lose the Nature of *true Virtue*; Because,  
God being infinitely removed from all  
possibility of Errour, Arbitrariness, or  
any evil Disposition whatsoever; Men  
cannot possibly by the Fear or Sense of *his*  
Anger, be excited or moved to do any  
Action, but what at the same Time they  
must of necessity be convinced in their  
own Minds, is Fit and Right and Reason-  
able for them to do. And Punishments  
inflicted by *Men*; were they always  
faithfully and righteously applied, that  
is, were they never, except in Cases of  
necessary *Self-Defence*, made use of to  
any other Purpose, than upon the Founda-  
tion of the acknowledged Difference be-  
tween Good and Evil, to *compel* Men to  
do what they themselves well know is their  
*Duty* to do; were this (I say) constantly  
the Case, Punishment from *Men* would  
then be of the same Nature, and have  
proportionably the same Effect, as Punish-  
ment from the Hand of *Providence*. But  
the Errors and Passions of Mankind, ha-  
ving too frequently brought great Confu-  
sion



sion into *their* Manner of dealing with each other; the right Use therefore and Application of Men's *Hopes* and *Fears* to the Purposes of Religion, is to turn them towards their most proper Object, the *Favour* or *Displeasure* of God. Now *Fear* being the *stronger* and more powerful Affection, than *Hope*; hence the *Judgments* of God, either *seen* or *felt*, either inflicted upon *ourselves*, or observed on *others*, are apt to work upon Men more effectually to bring them to Repentance, than the Observation of numerous Instances of the Divine Mercy and Goodness. In the Words immediately following my Text, and as a Confirmation of the Truth of the Proposition therein contained, that *When God's JUDGMENTS are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*; In confirmation of this Truth, let *FAVOUR* (says the Prophet) *be shown to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the Land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord: Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they SHALL see, and be ashamed: The Terrours of the Lord will force them to see, and they shall be ashamed. The Greatest of all the Temporal Terrours of the Lord, is Death: Death, which puts an End to all worldly Considerations, and consigns*  
Men

Serm. Men over to an unalterable Eternity.

VII. When *this* Messenger of the Divine Judicature apparently approaches ; there is no Man so void of Sense, as not to begin *then at least* to be seriously solicitous, what the Event of that Judgment will be, to which he perceives himself going without Delay. The *Reason why* he should be thus solicitous, is the same at all *other* Times. For near or far off, still Death is equally certain ; *and after that, the Judgment.* And how distant soever Death may at any Time seem to be from any particular Person, yet, even at that *greatest* seeming Distance, it *must of Necessity* be very near, it *may* be nearer than can be conceived. But Men are careless and stupid ; and the Heat of Passions corrupts their Sense, the Deceitfulness of Riches blinds their Eyes, the Pleasures of Life steal from them their Understandings ; and they willingly suffer the thinnest Mist to hide from them the clearest Light, and the meanest Trifle to divert them from the Thoughts of their eternal Interest. This is the Lethargy which in Time of Health and Prosperity, is apt to *stifle* the general Notices which God has given Men of himself in the standing Use both of Reason and Revelation. To awaken Men therefore from this State of Insensibility, God is pleased *sometimes* to *strengthen these general* Notices, by more *parti-*



particular and more immediately affecting Warnings; by *Threatnings* of impending Judgments upon *ourselves*, or by *Examples* of his inflicting them upon *others*. By these, he excites Men's Consideration and Attention, quells the Eagerness of ungoverned Passions, and lays open to them the Folly of Ambition and Covetousness. By these, as 'tis elegantly expressed in the Book of *Job* ch. xxxiii. 16. by These he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction; That he may withdraw Man from his Purpose, and hide Pride from Man. And ch. xxxvi. 8. If they be bound in Fetters, and held in Cords of Affliction; then God sheweth them their Work, and their Transgression, that they have exceeded: He openeth also their Ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from their Iniquity. All temporal Judgments therefore whatsoever, are properly of a medicinal Nature, and mercifully intended for our Benefit: All of them without Exception, for the Benefit of such as shall take Warning from them in *others*; and all those of them which are short of Death, for the Benefit even of the *Persons themselves* on whom they fall. *It is good for me*, says the Psalmist, *that I have been afflicted*: For, *before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I have learnt thy Precepts.* The

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Serm. gentle Admonitions of Afflictions sent up-  
 VII. on *particular* Persons, are the *still Voice*  
 ~ of the divine Patience, calling Sinners to  
 Repentance : And the severest Calamities  
 even of *publick* and *national* Desolations,  
 Fire and Sword, Dearth and Famines,  
 Plagues and Pestilences, are yet of the  
*same* Nature; being the *louder Calls*, and  
 as it were the *Thunder* of the Almighty's  
 Threatnings, *necessary* sometimes, and  
 even *these* not always sufficient, to rowse  
 up the Senses of a hard and stupid, of a  
 vicious and debauched World. 'Tis *no*  
*Pleasure* to the Almighty, to grieve the  
 Children of Men : And 'tis with the high-  
 est Eloquence of *affectionate* Expressions,  
 that the Scripture constantly sets forth to  
 us, how *unwilling* God is to execute his  
 severer Threatnings, how *ready* always  
 to remove his Judgments upon Men's true  
 Repentance, and how he *searches* as it  
 were for *every* Argument, and *every* Mo-  
 tive of Compassion : *Shall I not spare*  
*Niniveh, that great City, wherein are*  
*more than sixscore thousand Persons, that*  
*know not their right Hand from their left?*  
*Nay, shall I not spare Sodom,* does the  
 Scripture represent him saying within him-  
 self; shall I not spare it for the sake of  
*ten Righteous*, if so many can be found  
 therein ? But that the *severest* of the di-  
 vine Judgments, are sometimes *absolutely*  
*nece-*

*necessary*; and that the Corruption of the World, were it to be always in a *continued and uninterrupted Prosperity*, would be *altogether Intolerable*; is apparent from hence, that even *these Judgments themselves, seen* inflicted upon *others*, nay even *felt* inflicted upon Men's *selves*, even *These* very frequently prove *ineffectual*. How often, when we see great Calamities befall our Neighbours; instead of being warned thereby to amend our *own* Lives, do we turn it only into an Occasion of Uncharitableness in censuring *others*! Which Spirit, is very affectionately reprov'd by our Saviour, *Luke xiii. 2.* Suppose ye that *these Galilæans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices, were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things?* I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them; think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Nay, how frequently do the severest of God's Judgments inflicted upon a Nation or People; the last and loudest Call to Repentance, after which there remains no Remedy against final Excision; how often do *These* prove ineffectual, to awaken



Serm. VII. *even those very Persons upon whom they are inflicted; and leave them in an incorrigible impenitency, hardened to Destruction! Thus of King Abaz we find it recorded, 2 Chr. xxviii. 22. that in the Time of his Distress, he trespassed yet more against the Lord: This is that King Ahaz. And of the whole People of Israel, in a most eloquent Complaint by the Prophet Amos. ch. iv. 6; I have given you Want of Bread in all your Cities; ----- I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew, when your Gardens and your Vineyards the Palmer-worm devoured; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the Pestilence after the Manner of Egypt, and your young Men have I slain with the Sword; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha, and yewere as a Firebrand pluckt out of the Burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. In like Manner in the new Testament, speaking of the Punishment of the Nations in the latter-days, which call themselves Christians; Rev. ix. 20, 21. The rest of the Men which were not killed by these Plagues, yet repented not---of their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts: Of their Sor-*

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ceries; that is, of all their superstitious Methods of making Men fancy themselves to be religious, by what *others* can do for or to them, or by what *they* can do for themselves, without the Practice of Righteousness and true Virtue. And Ch. xvi. 9. *Men were scorched with great Heat, and blasphemed the Name of God who hath Power over these Plagues; and they repented not, to give him Glory;---- But blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their Pains,----and repented not of their Deeds.* In this Passage; (*Men repented not, to give him Glory;*) 'tis worthy of Observation, by the Way, wherein consists the true and Scripture-Notion of the *Glory of God*. It consists in reasonable Creatures living, (under a due and constant Sense of the Divine Government,) according to the Rules of Reason, of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness and Truth. And *Sinners* have no other possible Way of *giving Glory to God*, but by repenting of their evil Deeds; that is, amending their Lives, obeying *the everlasting Gospel*, and forsaking those Vices which are opposite to God's Kingdom of Virtue and Righteousness. Which Observation may be of good Use, for preventing many wrong Notions concerning the Nature of true Religion, and of the *Glory of God*. But to proceed. The Reason

Serm.

VII.

Serm. *why* the Judgments, the severest and most  
 VII. awakening Judgments of God, even those  
 ~~~~~ which cannot fail to convince Men of the  
 Transitoriness, and Uncertainty, and Va-
 nity of every Thing here below; do yet
 nevertheless very often prove *ineffectual* to
 cause Sinners *thus* to give Glory to God,
 by bringing them to true Repentance;
 the Reason (I say) why even *these* Judg-
 ments often fail of this Effect, is a con-
 fused, uncertain, inattentive sort of In-
 fidelity; which, ascribing all Calamities
 to *second* Causes, and lamenting them on-
 ly as unavoidable *natural Disasters*, looks
 not up to the Hand of the *first* Cause,
 which steers and directs the whole Course
 of Nature. *Wars* and *Desolations*, we
 see, arise from the Passions of Men. *Fa-*
mines, are owing to Accidents of Wind
 and Weather. *Plagues* and *Pestilences*,
 those great destroying Angels possibly *are*
 or however *may be imagined to be*, Va-
 pours and Steams out of the Earth. And,
 because the Grounds of these Things ap-
 pear in *Nature*; therefore weak and fool-
 ish Men, intent upon the *Weapon* only,
 and not upon *him who strikes* with it, re-
 gard not to give Glory to the God of Na-
 ture. Whereas in Truth and Reality,
NATURE is nothing but an empty
 Word; and the *Course of Nature* (as 'tis
 vulgarly called,) excepting only the Ope-
 rations

rations of free Agents, is merely an *abstract Notion* or Expression of the *regularity* of *his* Operations, who made and governs all Things. Even the Counsels and Designs of *Men*, are, by Incidents unforeseen to *them*, perpetually over-ruled to quite different Events, than *they* intended or could possibly imagine. But as to *UNINTELLIGENT Natural Causes*; whatever *they* seem to effect, is not in reality done by *them* at all, but by the Providence of God. That the *Sun runs* its course *every Day*, is no less strictly and properly the Hand of God, than that it *stood still* one Day. Nor is there any other Reason, why *supernatural Miracles* are by all Men readily ascribed to God, when the equally great *Miracles of Nature* are vulgarly fancied to be done without him; for this (I say) there is no other than this one foolish Reason, that what God does *once*, Men see and acknowledge is done by *him*; but what he does *always*, they *therefore* think 'tis not *he* does it *at all*. The Scripture (and Reason also) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*. That 'tis *he*, who causes *HIS Son to rise*, and *sends us Rain and fruitful Seasons*. That 'tis *he*, who (in the Psalmist's Expression) *maketh the Grass to grow upon the Mountains*; giving even to the *BEAST* his

Serm. *Food, and to the young Ravens which*
 VII. *call upon him. That, without him, not*
 ~~~~~ *a Sparrow falls to the Ground, but even*  
*the very Hairs of our Head are all num-*  
*bred. That 'tis he alone, who gives us*  
*richly all Things to enjoy; even all those*  
*Things, which, in a vulgar and careless*  
*Way of speaking, we usually ascribe to*  
*natural and inanimate Causes. Which*  
*very same Causes, whensoever he pleases,*  
*he can make to be the Instruments of our*  
*Punishment, as well as of our Support.*  
*He can (as Moses elegantly expresses it;)*  
*Make the Heavens over our Heads, to be*  
*Brass; and the Earth under our Feet, I-*  
*ron. He can punish with the Pestilence*  
*that walketh in Darkness, and with the*  
*Sickness that destroyeth at the Noon-*  
*Day. He can scorch with Drought, or*  
*drown with Moisture, or blast with un-*  
*wholsom Winds; in order to destroy with*  
*Famine, and make a fruitful Land bar-*  
*ren, for the Wickedness of them that dwell*  
*therein. Or, without removing the Bless-*  
*ings themselves of Nature, he can at any*  
*Time withdraw the Benefit and the Ef-*  
*fects of them. When God with Rebukes*  
*doth chasten Man for Sin, he maketh his*  
*Beauty to consume away, as it were a*  
*Moth fretting a Garment, Ps. xxxix. 11.*  
 So that, besides God's more visible Judgments upon a Nation or People, they will  
 sometimes

sometimes by a *secret* Curse insensibly decay in their Riches and their Strength. They will, they know not how, be strangely impoverished in the very midst of Plenty, and weakened even by the greatest Successes; while they see not by what silent Steps and imperceptible degrees (like *grey Hairs* and the Infirmities of old Age) Poverty and Weakness steal in upon them. By these various Methods, does the divine Patience awaken and call Men to Repentance. After which, if (in the Prophet's Expression) *the People turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither will they seek the Lord of Hosts: If, when thou hast stricken them, they have not grieved; when thou hast consumed them, they have refused to receive Correction, they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return: there then remains nothing, but that severest* [of all temporal Threatnings, *Jer. ii. 19. Thine OWN WICKEDNESS shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee. Thus did God deal with the antient Jews, Ps. lxxxix. 11. My People would not hearken unto my Voice, and Israel would not obey me: So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lusts, and let them follow their own Imaginations: And with the same People in our Saviour's Time. Matt. xxiii. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that thou killest*



Serm. *killest the Prophets, and stonest them which*  
 VII. *are sent unto thee! how often would I have*  
 gathered thy Children together, even as a  
*Hen gathereth her Chickens under her*  
*Wings, and ye would not! Behold, your*  
*House is left unto you desolate.*

It cannot be doubted but your Thoughts have already all along prevented me, in applying what has been said unto ourselves; for whose *Admonition* these Things are written, and they were intended for *Examples* unto Us, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. There is no Nation upon Earth, that has had greater Experience of the divine Goodness, than we have had. We have long enjoy'd the inestimable Blessing of a *free and legal Government*, while other Nations have groan'd under the Violence of arbitrary Oppressions. We have had the free Use of our *Reason* and of the *Holy Scriptures* allowed us, which under other Governments, that yet call themselves *Christian*, have, for many Ages together, been persecuted even unto Death. We have enjoy'd all the Plenty and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the midst of the most vigorous and bloody Wars: While the Sword and Fire have consumed round about us, and other fruitful Countries have been ravaged and destroyed: While thousands have fallen beside us, and ten thousands



*sands at our right Hand*, and yet Providence has protected us, that *it came not nigh Us*: While Want and Famine spread Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a Distance threatned still severer Judgments of God. What *Returns* we have made to the divine Goodness for these *Lengthenings of our Tranquility*, appears too sadly in that Impiety and Profaneness, that Looseness and Debauchery, that Iniquity and Uncharitableness, that unrighteous and irreligious Spirit of Heat, Violence and Factionness, which still abounds amongst us. For these Things God has at several Times visited this Nation, with some sharp Remembrances of his Displeasure, and has at other Times threatned us with very near Approaches, of a more lasting and destructive Wrath. The Sword of his destroying Angel, is *at this Day* unsheathed before us; and how far his Commission may extend, God only knows. The *only certain* Way of deprecating God's Wrath effectually, is to bring forth beforehand those Fruits meet for Repentance, to which all the divine Judgments, that are not finally destructive, are intended to excite us. The *first* Thing is, that every *private* Person would for himself seriously examine, and amend (as *Solomon* expresses it, in that solemn Prayer of his,

1 Kings

Serm. 1 *Kings* viii. 38.) *every Man the Plague of*  
 VII. *his own Heart*; that is, reform his *private*  
 and *personal Faults*, whatever they be.  
 In the *next Place*, with Regard to the  
*Publick*: Since God has been pleased to  
 continue to us the Knowledge of the *Gos-*  
*pel*, in a more *free* and *unrestrained Use*  
 of the *Scriptures* than most other Nations  
 enjoy; it behoves us, (lest we provoke  
 God to *remove our Candlestick* out of its  
 Place,) to take due and constant Care that  
 we bring every Thing impartially to the  
 Test of that sacred Rule; and that in our  
 Practice we continually so behave ourselves,  
 as becomes those who have always before  
 their Eyes the uncorrupted Doctrine and  
 Precepts of Christ. And since in the  
*Civil Government* likewise, it has hither-  
 to pleased God, by many even miraculous  
 Events, to continue to us our Laws and  
 Liberties; it imports us, (as we would  
 not draw down upon our Heads, that  
 greatest of all the temporal Plagues of  
 God, *arbitrary Power*;) it imports us,  
 every Man in his Station, to the utmost  
 of his Ability, to support and maintain  
 a Government so constituted. That the  
*People*, under the uniform and steady  
 Protection of wise and equitable Laws,  
 may serve God quietly and with religious  
 Fear. And that the King may *rejoice in*  
*thy Strength, O Lord, and be exceeding*  
*glad*



at St. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

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glad of thy Salvation : That thou mayest <sup>Serm.</sup>  
give him his Hearts Desire, and not deny VII.  
him the Request of his Lips: That thou  
mayest prevent him with the Blessings of  
Goodness, and make his Honour great in  
thy Salvation, and crown him with Glo-  
ry and great Worship: That thou may'st  
give him a long Life here, and a longer  
and happier hereafter, even for ever and  
ever.



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# SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. *James's Westminster*, Decemb. 8. 1721. being the Day of *Fasting and Humiliation*, for beseeching God to preserve us from the *Plague*.

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LUKE xiii. 2, 3.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

**T**IS the natural Voice and Judgment of Reason, in which all Men who have any Sense of God upon their Mind, in all Nations and in all Ages, have agreed; that the Miseries and Calamities which befall Mankind, are all of them the *Effects* and *Consequences* of Sin.

Serm.  
VIII.

Serm. *Sin.* Considering the essential Goodness  
 VIII. of God, who cannot take Pleasure in the  
 ~~~~~ needless Afflictions of his Creatures; this  
 Notion, in *general*, cannot but be right. And, were there no other State but this; were this World the whole of God's creation, and took in the whole Period of our Being; it could not but be moreover true in *particular*, that the *Proportion* of Misery which befalls every single Person, would be exactly correspondent to his Crimes. But *here*, there comes in a very great Variety of *different* Considerations. The present State being a Time of *Tryal*, and not of *Retribution*; there hence arise many wise Reasons, why God sometimes permits the greatest of Afflictions to fall upon the best of Men, and sometimes suffers the wickedest of Men to go on in an uninterrupted Course of Prosperity; and, in the Execution of temporal Judgments, very frequently involves the righteous in the same Calamities which he sends upon the ungodly. The only Use therefore that *can* be made, and which Providence intends should be made, of the divine Judgments here upon Earth; is to convince us of the Evil of Sin in general, to awaken us from a careless and inconsiderate Temper, to wean us from too great a Fondness for the uncertain Injoyments of this present Life; and to put
 us

us continually upon mending *our own* Manners, and improving *ourselves* more and more in the Practice of Virtue; and not at all to enable us to judge concerning *others*, before the great Day of Account, what *their* State and Condition is, with Regard to the final Favour or Displeasure of God. This is a Matter of Curiosity, which concerns not *us* to know; and every Judgment we attempt to make concerning it, has, in the present State of Things, even a proper and natural Tendency to deceive us. Every *private* Person, in this Way of judging, whenever he compares himself with others; 'tis odds but, according as his natural Temper be, whether Melancholy, or Presumptuous; he determines either *uncharitably* of *others*, or with unreasonable *Despondency* of *himself*; from Dispensations of Providence, which neither to *him* nor *them* are at all the proper Rule of judging in that Matter. But *publick* Bodies of Men; Nations, Sects, or Parties; whenever *they* take upon them to judge of each other in this Method, they hardly ever fail to err on the *presumptuous* Side; and to turn every Judgment of God, which falls upon Men of *other* Denominations, into an Argument of Pride and Favour towards *themselves*. This is what our

Serm.
VIII.

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Sav iour

Serm. Saviour, in the Text, warns us against,
 VIII. *Suppose ye, says he, that those Galilæans,*
 who fell by *Pilate's Cruelty* in so extraordinary a Manner, as that their *own Blood* was mingled with the Blood of *their Sacrifices*; suppose ye that these Men were *Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things?* I tell you, nay, but, *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The Persons who told our Lord of this extraordinary Calamity, *ver. 1.* seem to have done it with an Expectation of Curiosity, to see what Observations our Lord would make concerning the Behaviour and Circumstances and State of those Men towards God, upon whom this particular Misfortune fell. But he in *this*, according to his constant Method in all other Cases, disappointed their unprofitable inquisitiveness; and, instead of satisfying them about other Men's Affairs, turns their Question into an Occasion of making some useful Application to *themselves*: I tell you, says he, *except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.*

In discoursing upon which Words, it may be useful for us to observe: 1st. Our Saviour's *general* Manner; that, whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing

ing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. And 2dly. The *particular* Doctrine contained in these Words: That, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflicted upon account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the Degrees of Men's Demerits; and that therefore the proper Use to be made of them, is, never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer *for ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance.

1st. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole History of the Gospel, than our Saviour's *general* Method: That, whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. He passes no Judgment upon those unhappy *Galilæans*, whose extraordinary Misfortune was now reported to him. He makes no Observation upon the Characters of the Persons, nor gives any Hint of the peculiar Rea-

Serm. sons for which Providence thus distin-
 VIII. guished them from the Bulk of Sinners.
 ~~~~~ But (what was of much more Use to the  
 Persons who made the Enquiry, and to  
 all Christians in general, for whose In-  
 struction our Lord's Reply is recorded in  
 the Gospel;) he hence takes Occasion to  
 inculcate upon *all* Sinners, the Necessity  
 of Repentance and Amendment of Life,  
 in order to escape God's final Wrath.  
 And this was his constant Method, upon  
 all *other* Occasions. When one asked him  
*ver. 23. of this Chapter, Lord, are there*  
*Few that be saved?* instead of satisfying  
 the Person's Curiosity, he exhorts both  
 him that asks the Question, and as many  
 others as were present, to take Care that  
*they themselves* be found in the Number,  
*whatever that Number be. Strive ye to*  
*enter in at the strait Gate; for many, I*  
*say unto you, will seek to enter in, and*  
*shall not be able. When once the Master of*  
*the House is risen up, and hath shut to the*  
*Door, and ye begin to stand without, and*  
*to say, Lord,---we have eaten and drunk*  
*in thy presence, and thou hast taught in*  
*our Streets; he shall say, I tell you, I*  
*know you not whence you are; depart from*  
*me, all ye Workers of Iniquity. Again:*  
 When his Disciples asked him, *Matt. xviii.*  
*1. Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of*  
*Heaven?* Instead of naming, according  
 to



Serm.

VIII.

to their Expectation, some among themselves, who had conversed with him most intimately here upon Earth; (which Expectation showed forth itself particularly in the Request of the Mother of Zebedees Children, that *one of her Sons* might sit on his right Hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom :) Instead of this, I say, he tells them *which* was the *only Way* whereby they could attain to the Kingdom of Heaven at all. Setting a little Child in the midst of them, he said, *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* In like Manner, when the Disciples asked him, *Matt. xxiv. 3. When shall these Things be? And what shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of the End of the World?* the Sum of his Answer is: *Watch ye, and be ye ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.* And, take heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness and Cares of this Life; and so that Day come upon you unawares. For as a Snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the Face of the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be account-

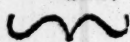
Matt. 42, 44.

Luke xxi.

44.

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VIII.

Mat. xix.  
17.Luke x.  
40, 42.

*ed worthy to escape all these Things, and to stand before the Son of Man.* And the same Turn that he thus always gave to curious *Questions* put to him, the same he likewise constantly gave to *incidental Things* said to him, or to particular *Facts and Events* taken Notice of in his Presence. When one prefaced a Question he was about to propose to him, with that respectful Title and Mark of Esteem, *good Master*, he *thence* takes Occasion, even from so seemingly *small* a Handle, to instruct the Person in that great and prime Foundation, of all Religion, that *God and God only*, is perfectly and essentially good. *Why callest thou me, good? There is none good, but one; that is, God.* Again, when *Martha cumbred with much serving*, complained to him, *Lord, dost thou not care that my Sister hath left me to serve alone?* instead of *speaking to her Sister to come and help her*, he takes a gentle Occasion from her own Complaint, to remind her of a more important Piece of Service: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things; but one Thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good Part, which shall not be taken from her.* At another Time, when one of the Company he was discoursing to, desired him to *speake to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him*; instead of *making himself*



himself a *Judge* and *Divider* between them, he chose rather to take that Occasion to preach to *them all* against Covetousness: *Take heed and beware of Covetousness; for a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesses.* In another Place, when a Person in the Company to whom he was preaching, astonished at the Excellency of his Doctrine, cried out, *Blessed is the Woman that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked,* Luke xi. 27. immediately he turns their Thoughts from the Admiration of *himself*, to that which would most effectually be profitable to *them*: *Yea rather,* says he, *Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.* Upon another Occasion, when his Disciples prayed him to eat, John iv. 31. He lets not even that Opportunity slip, of reminding them how, to a rational and well-disposed Mind, there is no Pleasure so great, as that of doing what is right: *I have meat,* says he, *to eat, that ye know not of;--My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* 'Twould be repeating the *whole* Gospel, the *whole* History of our Saviour's Life; to mention *all* the Instances of his turning *every Incident* that came before him, into Matter of Instruction and Admonition to those with whom he conversed. When some

Serm.

VIII.

Luke xii.

15.



Serm. of the Pharisees advised him to *retire* out  
 VIII. of the Reach of *Herod*, who, they in-  
 formed him, had a Design to *kill* him,  
*Luke* xiii. 31. Instead of being drawn, as  
 probably *they* expected, by that seeming  
 friendly and officious Advice, to enter  
 with them into the *Character* of *Herod*  
 and *his* Government; he, in a very *extraor-*  
*dinary* and yet most *natural* Manner turns  
 his Answer into a *severe Reproof* of *their*  
*own* Incurigibleness, and into an Occa-  
 sion of giving them *Warning*, how near  
 the *final Wrath* of God was *impending* up-  
 on them: *It cannot be*, says he, *that a*  
*Prophet perish out of Jerusalem: O Jeru-*  
*salem, Jerusalem, which killest the Pro-*  
*phets, and stonest them that are sent unto*  
*thee; how often would I have gathered thy*  
*Children together, as a Hen doth gather*  
*her Brood under her Wings, and ye would*  
*not! Behold, your House is left unto you*  
*desolate.* In like Manner, when his Dis-  
 ciples, as they were going out of the Tem-  
 ple, observed to him, *Master, see what*  
*Manner of Stones, and what Buildings*  
*are here,* Mark xiii. 1. Instead of adding,  
 as they seemed to expect, *his own* Obser-  
 vations concerning the *Sumptuousness* and  
*Magnificence* of the Building, and the  
*Grandeur* and *Riches* of the Builder; he  
 on the contrary turns their Thoughts from  
*these* considerations, to the view of that  
*final*

*final Destruction* which God intended to bring upon the whole Nation, for their continued Perverseness and Disobedience: *Seest thou* (says he to the Person who desired him to take Notice of the Stateliness of the Fabrick; *Seest thou*) *these great Buildings?* *There shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* And thus likewise, in the Words of the Text: *When some that were present, told him of the Galilæans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices;* he did not, (as they, who mentioned this Matter to him, seemed to expect; he did not) hereupon enter into a Discourse concerning either the *Cruelty of Pilate* who murdered these *Galilæans*, or his *Impiety and Profaneness* in murdering them at the *Place and Time* of God's *publick Worship*, or concerning the *unhappiness* of the *Persons themselves* who perished by so *particular a Misfortune*, or concerning the *peculiar Reasons* why the *divine Providence* thought fit to *distinguish* these particular Persons by a *singular Judgment*: But, instead of all this, he immediately makes the *Application* to his *Auditors then present*, and to the *Persons themselves who told him of the Fact*; warning them of the indispensable Necessity of effectual Repentance and Amendment of Life as the only possible Means  
by

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VIII.



Serm. by which *they themselves* could escape  
 VIII. God's final Vengeance. *Suppose ye (says he) that these Galilæans were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or these eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

2dly. Having thus at large set forth to you our Saviour's *general* Method; that whenever Men propos'd to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some practical Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing: It remains now in the *second* Place, that I proceed to consider the *particular* Doctrine, express'd in the Words of the Text; that, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflict'd upon Account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the Degrees of Men's Demerits; and that, therefore, the proper Use to be made of them, is never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer  
*for*

for ourselves the Necessity of Repentance. Sermon.  
That all the temporal Judgments God at VIII.  
any Time inflicts upon Mankind, are on  
the Account of *Sin*, cannot indeed possibly be denied; because 'tis on the Account of *Sin*, that Men are at all placed in this State of *Misery* and *Mortality*. Had *Sin* never entered into the World, Man had never been excluded out of *Paradise*, and from the *Tree of Life*; which was, either literally or figuratively, a Means or an Emblem of Immortality and Happiness. And at last, when *Transgression* shall be finished, and, an End made of *Sin*; the Fruit of the *Tree of Life* (as the Prophe-tick Language expresses it) shall be again restored, and the *Leaves of the Tree* shall be for the *Healing of the Nations*. To *Sin* therefore in general, 'tis evident, all the Miseries of this mortal State are wholly owing. Nevertheless, since this present State is not a State of *Retribution* in particular, but only such a State of *Trial* or *Probation*, as God, in Consequence of *Sin*'s entring into the World, thought fit to appoint Men to undergo; a State, in which the Righteous and the Wicked, without a perpetual miraculous Interposition, cannot but be frequently involved in the same Calamities together; a State, in which the best and most innocent Persons very often suffer, even the most grievously



Serm. *voufly*, by and from the Wicked; a State,  
VIII. wherein God himself sometimes thinks

fit, by Afflictions of his own more immediate appointing, (by Winds and Storms, by Floods and general Devastations, by Famines, Pestilences, and the like universal Calamities, which fall upon all promiscuously,) to try the Faith and Patience and Resignation of his Servants; and in which State we can never judge with any Certainty, whether even those who are the most suddenly cut off, are cut off in Judgment or in Mercy: For these Reasons, whenever we see any extraordinary Calamity befall any particular *Person*, or any Body of Men, or any one *Nation* in particular; we ought never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning the State of *others* with Regard to God, but only to infer for *ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance. 'Tis a very natural Piece of Pride, in careless and corrupt Minds, to build an Opinion of their *own* Goodness, upon the *comparative* Badness of *others*; and, in *judging* of this *comparative* Badness of *others*, to deceive themselves, by founding that Judgment either upon *what others suffer* at the Hand of God, or perhaps upon *what Faults others are guilty of* in one particular *Manner*, when possibly *they themselves* are in *some other Manner* guilty of the very *same* Offences.

Offences. Thus for Instance, Christians of the *reformed Religion* condemn, and very justly, those of the *Church of Rome*, as guilty of the highest Absurdity and Irreligion, who in a continual Circle look upon themselves as absolved from their Sins, which they *confess* to a *Priest*, and then *return* to their Sins again: And yet among *Protestants* every one is really guilty of the very same Absurdity and Irreligion, who in a continual Circle looks upon himself as absolved from his Sins, which he *confesses* to *God Almighty*, and then *returns* to them again. Thus Men are very apt to deceive themselves, in comparing *other Men's Actions* with their *own*. And so they are apt to do also, in comparing their *Sufferings*. A false and deceitful Heart, (especially in Cases where *Bodies* of Men, where *Nations* or *Seets* or *Parties* are concerned,) is very ready to flatter itself with Imaginations of being *itself more in Favour* with God, when the severer Sorts of the *divine Judgments* inflicted upon *others*, fill it with uncharitable Suspicions of the *Grounds and Reasons* of those Judgments. In some few particular Cases indeed, where the *Judgment* is the immediate *Consequence* and direct *Effect* of the *Sin*; as, where the *Diseases* are the immediate *Produce* of the *Debauchery*; or where either *single Persons*

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Serm. *sons or whole Nations do themselves greatly*  
VIII. *suffer, in the very Attempt of despoiling*  
~~~~~ *others of their manifest Right: In these*  
Cases there is indeed no uncharitableness,
in ascribing the Judgment to the Sin. But
much oftner, and indeed generally speaking,
it arises wholly from Men's Partiality to-
wards themselves, that they are so ready to
throw upon others the Causes of the Judg-
ments wherewith God punishes Mankind.
Thus of old in the Heathen Roman Em-
pire, whenever God was pleased to send a-
mong them Plagues or Famines, or Deva-
stations by the Incurſion of barbarous Na-
tions; the Christians immediately, as if
they were the Causes of the Calamity, were
hurried to the Prisons, to the Racks, and
to the wild Beasts. 'Tis not easy for Men
to see it in themselves: But something of
the same Spirit there is in every wicked
Man, when, instead of being moved by
the Judgments of God to examine and a-
mend his own Heart, his Eyes are conti-
nually searching after the real or imagi-
nary Faults of others. Who art thou that
judgeſt another Man's Servant? To his
own Master he standeth or falleth. But if
we would observe our Saviour's Direction
in the Text, and form our Notions of
Things according to that Rule; herein we
could never be deceived. The Judgments
of God, which we see abroad in the
World,

World, are a *proper* and *continual* Warn- Ser-
 ing to *all* Sinners, to bring them to Re- VIII.
 pentance and *effectual* Amendment: With-
 out which, they must *all* finally and ine-
 vitably perish. The *Jews*, to whom our
 Saviour gave the Admonition in the Text,
 did, at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, pe-
 rish in great Multitudes *literally* by the
very same Calamity, which had before
 fallen upon the *Galilæans* here mentioned.
 And *all Sinners* in *all Ages*, who see the
 Judgments of God fall *upon others*, ought
 to consider, that they know not how soon
 the *very same* Calamities may fall *upon*
themselves. But whether the Punishment
 overtakes them at all *here*, or no; it will,
 without timely and effectual Amendment,
 certainly overtake them *hereafter*. Which
 is a *much more terrible* Consideration: For
if these Things are done in the green Tree,
what shall be done in the dry? If Judg-
 ment begin at the House of God, what shall
 the End be of them that obey not the Gos-
 pel? If the *temporal* Calamities which
 fall upon mixt Multitudes *here*, of the
 righteous and wicked together, be so dread-
 ful; what shall the Estate be of *those*, who
 shall be punished with *EVERLASTING*
 Destruction from the Presence of the Lord,
 and from the Glory of his Majesty?

A SER -

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. *James's Westminster*, Apr. 25. 1723. being the Day appointed by his Majesty for a publick *Thanksgiving* to God for preserving his Majesty and his Subjects from that dreadful *Plague* with which the Kingdom of *France* was lately visited; and for putting an End to the same.

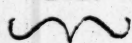
MATT. XXIV. 7.

For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom: And there shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places.

THESE Words are Part of the Serm. IX.
 propheticall Description, which
 our Saviour gives his Disciples a
 little before his Death, of the State of
 O Things

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Things which should be between that Time and the final Destruction of the *Jewish* Temple and Nation ; and, under that Type, the State of the World in general during the larger Period, until his coming to Judgment. The *principal* Thing, about which he most *distinctly* and *particularly* admonishes them, is the *Persecutions and Difficulties* they and their Followers must expect to meet with, more or less, in all Ages. *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Names-Sake : And many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another : And because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold:* That is, the general Corruption and Wickedness of the World, shall *discourage* many, and weary them out, and make them lay aside all Thoughts of Religion, and give themselves up to be carried with the Stream of an unrighteous and debauched World. For there *shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the Beginning of the World unto this Time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those Days should be shortened, there should no Flesh be saved :* (That is, the Truth of Religion, if this State of Things were long to continue, would be *totally extinguished* among Men, by the Universality of prevailing Corruptions :)

tions :) *But, for the Elects sake, those Days shall be shortened.* This (I say) is the *principal* particular, upon which our Lord here *chiefly* enlarges: That, in after Ages, Men might not be *surprized*, when they should find that the *Prince of Peace* came not to send *Peace upon Earth, but a Sword*; and that the Religion of Christ, a Religion of the most perfect Simplicity and Plainness, of the completest and most extensive Charity, should be over-run with universal Confusions and Iniquity. But *besides* this *principal* and more *especial* Aim of his Discourse, he intermixes moreover some general *Intimations* of other Events which should happen in the World; and particularly of the *Judgments*, wherewith the divine Providence would from Time to Time punish the unrighteous Nations of the Earth. *Ye shall bear* (says he) *of Wars, and Rumors of Wars: See that ye be not troubled: For all these Things must come to pass:--- For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be Famine, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places: All these are the Beginnings of Sorrows.*

With Regard to *each* of these particulars, viz. the *Persecutions* wherewith good Men should be oppressed by an un-

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*righteous World, and the Judgments where-
with the divine Providence should at any
Time punish the Nations of the Earth;*
the Advice our Lord gives his Disciples,
is, to *PRAY* constantly to God, that
he would be pleas'd either to *prevent*
these Things coming upon them, or
lighten the Burden of them by provi-
dential Supports. *Pray ye, says he, that
your Flight be not in the Winter, neither
on the Sabbath-day. And, watch ye there-
fore, and pray always, that ye may be ac-
counted worthy to escape all these Things
that shall come to pass, and to stand be-
fore the Son of Man.* Now the same
Reason that there is, why we ought at
any Time to *PRAY*, that God would ei-
ther *prevent* or *remove* from us any Ca-
lamity; the *very same* Reason there is, to
return him our *THANKS* and *PRAISE*,
whenever he has been pleas'd either to
withdraw from us any such Calamity, or
the apparent *Danger* of it. The *Ground*
of *both*, is the *same*; that God, who has
Power over all, is the alone Disposer of
all Events; and that that Disposition of
Mind, which leads Men to apply to *him*
for all the good Things they want, and
to make Acknowledgment to *him* for all
the Benefits they have received, is one of
the principal of those Qualifications which
recommend Men to the Divine Favour,
and

at St. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

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and to the more immediate Care and Protection of his good Providence. The Meaning of which is, that not even the *best of Men* can have any certain Security that they shall escape the Calamities of this present Life; nay, in some Cases, as in that of Persecution particularly, they are *for that very Reason* the most exposed, because they are the *best Men*: But the Meaning is, that God who *created* the *material* World for the Sake of the *moral* One, and *governs* the *former* always with a View to the *latter*; (for the unintelligent *material* World, how exquisite soever the Fabrick of it be, is *nothing at all* any otherwise, than as it has Relation to *Intelligent* and *Rational* Beings that inhabit it:) God, I say, who *created* the *material* World merely for the Sake of the *moral* one, and *governs* the *former* always with a View to the *latter*, will certainly make *all Things* (sooner or later) *work together for good to them that love him*, Rom. viii. 28. Even the *severest Judgments* that he ever sends upon the World, and which *to incorrigible Sinners* are the Messengers of *Destruction*; even *these*, to well-disposed Minds, are either at a distance *Warnings* and *Admonitions* to amend: Or they are *Chastisements* inflicted for their *Correction*; which, though at present they cannot but be *grievous*, yet *afterwards*

Serm. *they yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteous-*
 IX. *ness unto them which are exercised thereby:*

Or they are *Trials* of Men's Faith and Patience; which being much more precious than of Gold that perishes, though it be tried with Fire, will be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Or, sometimes, they are Means of taking away the Righteous from greater Evils to come; so that though they seem to be punished for a little while, yet is their Hope full of Immortality: Or, however it be, still (as the Apostle expresses it) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: And the righteous have always this Security, that God is Faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. Nevertheless, since God only knows the Events of Things, and no Man can be sure of his own Strength; therefore Reason teaches, and our Lord expressly directs us, to Pray, that we may not be led into Temptation. And for the same Reason, 'tis our Duty to be thankful whenever Providence has prevented any Temptation from coming upon us. And the Case is the same, with Regard to every Sort of Affliction or Calamity in Life.

God

God is *able*, and *will certainly* cause all these Things to *work together for good*, to those who are truly and sincerely Religious. Yet, sensible of our own Unworthiness; and knowing that these Things are also sometimes Messengers of *Wrath*, and Instruments of *Destruction*; 'tis therefore our Duty to *pray* continually for the *Averting* of them, and to return *Thanks* for every *Escape of Danger* from them, and to be always ready to make a religious Use either of their being *inflicted* or *prevented*. See that ye be not troubled, says our Lord; for *all these Things MUST come to pass:---For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places.*

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The *Particulars* of this Prophecy of our Lord, we have seen *literally* and *remarkably* fulfilled in *our own Days*: And yet God has been graciously pleased, not to suffer *any one* of these Calamities to come nigh *our Dwellings*. We have seen *Nation rise up against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom*: We have seen *Fire and Sword* consume round about us, and many fruitful Countries ravaged and destroyed; yet at the same Time, we have sat every Man *under his Vine and under*

Serm. *his Fig-Tree*; injoying all the Blessings

IX. and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the
 ~~~~~ midst of the most bloody and destructive  
*Wars*. We have seen *Want* and *Famine*  
 spread Desolation over different Countries,  
 whilst *we* have been even luxurious in the  
 abundance of overflowing *Plenty*. We  
 have known populous and flourishing  
 Towns, overthrown in one Day with a  
 Storm and *Earthquake*; while *our* Habi-  
 tation has been, as the Scripture speaks,  
 the *Munition of Rocks*: So that the Psal-  
 mist's Ground of Praise, (Ps. cxxv. 2. As  
*the Hills stand about Jerusalem, even so*  
*standeth the Lord round about his People*)  
 may very properly be applied to *US*: As  
*the Seas encompass our Land*, may *we* no  
 less justly say, even so has the Protection  
 of *Providence* surrounded us on *every side*.  
 Lastly, (which is the more *immediate* and  
*particular* Occasion of our meeting toge-  
 ther at *this Time* to return Thanks to God;) *we*  
 have seen *that destroying Angel*, the  
*Pestilence*, executing in particular Places  
 the unsearchable Judgments of God; but  
 holding forth to *US* this Terror, at a *re-*  
 *mote Distance only*; to admonish and  
 warn us, (*not* to imagine that those parti-  
 cular Persons, upon whom this divine  
 Judgment fell, were *Sinners above all*  
*Men that dwelt on the Earth*; but that  
 we might take Notice,) that, unless we  
 repent,



*repent, we shall all likewise perish.* This Sermon. IX.  
is the proper End and Design of *all* God's *temporal* Judgments; to warn Men to amend: And the *only* valuable Expression of *Thankfulness*, for his having at any Time *averted* from us impending Dangers; is our being thereby led to a more careful Obedience. There is no where in the whole New Testament a severer Character given of incorrigible Sinners, than in those Passages where they are described as not only over-looking all the *general* Works of Nature and Providence, but as continuing moreover unmoved even at the most *exemplary* Expressions of the divine *Wrath*, and unthankfully insensible even of the most remarkable *Deliverances*. Rev. ix. 20. xvi. 9. *The rest of the Men which were not killed by these Plagues, yet repented not of the works of their Hands; but blasphemed the Name of God which has power over these Plagues, and repented not to give him Glory.* To give *Glory* to God, is, to make *publick Acknowledgment* of our Sense of God's continually governing the world in Wisdom and Righteousness; to *profess* our constant *Dependence* upon him, for all the good Things we *hope for* in the Course of Nature which he has appointed, and under the Direction of his allwise *Providence*; to return him *Thanks* for all the *Benefits*

Serm. *Benefits* we at any Time *receive*, and for

IX. every *Escape* or *Deliverance* vouchsafed  
 us from impending Dangers; and to *testify* the *Sincerity* of these Acknowledgments, by our *Obedience* to him in the course of a *virtuous* and *religious Life*; that *others* likewise, *seeing our good Works*, may *glorify our Father which is in Heaven*, and promote *his Kingdom*, which is the practise of *Virtue and Righteousness* in the World.

The *Things*, for which it is our Duty always to return Thanks to God, are, in general, every good Thing we enjoy: *Life, Health, Peace, Plenty, Liberty*, and every *Blessing* whatsoever, in which consists either the Happiness of the *present World*, or the Opportunities of laying a Foundation for *that which is to come*. But as these Blessings never appear so valuable, when by a long uninterrupted Injoyment we are accustomed to esteem them *only* the *common* Effects of the Course of Nature; as when at any Time, either by the *actual Want* of them, or by very *apparent Danger of losing* them, we are led to a juster and more considerate Estimation of Things, and with a more attentive View to behold the Hand from whence they all proceed; hence it is, that either after a *Deliverance* from the Weight of any severe Judgment, or after any remarkable



markable *Escape* from the Terroure of im-  
pending Danger, we seem to be in a more  
*particular* manner called unto *Thankful-*  
*ness*; though in reality the same Acknow-  
ledgment is no less justly due, for the con-  
stant and uniform Protection of Provi-  
dence. The Blessing of *Peace*, generally  
is justly esteemed and valued by *those only*,  
who have felt the Misery and Calamities  
of *War*: And yet without Question, 'tis  
a *greater Blessing*, to have been *always*  
preserved from those Calamities. The in-  
estimable Benefit of *Liberty*, hardly ever  
meets with any just Returns of Thankful-  
ness, but from such as have lately groan-  
ed under the cruel Bondage of *Tyranny*  
and *Oppression*; and yet, without all Con-  
troversy, in the true Estimation of Things,  
a *greater Acknowledgment* is due from  
those who have continually enjoyed that  
uninterrupted Protection. The Blessing  
of *Health* itself, that necessary Founda-  
tion of all other Injoyments whatsoever,  
very rarely meets with any just Sense of its  
real and intrinsick Value, except in those  
who have long been afflicted with the  
*Want* of it; and yet, without Dispute,  
the continual *Preservation* of it, is a *grea-*  
*ter Blessing* than the most unexpected *Re-*  
*covery*. In like manner, in the Instance  
of the *particular Occasion* upon which  
we are assembled at this Time: Had it  
pleased

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pleased God, that the devouring Pestilence had *nearly approach'd* our *Dwellings*; had it swept away our *dearest Relations*, or our most *valuable Friends*; or if even among those only, for whom we had no further Concern than what arises from the *general Ties* of *Humanity* and the *natural Sympathies* of *Neighbourhood*, we had seen *Thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right Hand*: Who is there, that does not feel within himself with what a *profound Sense* of the divine Goodness, the Survivors would have expressed their *Thankfulness* for the Mercy of *their own Deliverance*. And yet, in reality, how insensible soever many of us may be of the real value of the Blessing, a *greater Blessing* it is (unless our own Unthankfulness makes it *to us* cease in *Event* to be so; a *greater Blessing*, I say, it is,) to have had so severe a Judgment prevented from approaching us *at all*. For *this Instance* therefore of the *divine Mercy* towards us, it becomes us to return in a *particular Manner* our *most solemn Thanks*. And *this Expression* of our Duty, will *then* be acceptable in the Sight of God; if it leaves upon our Minds a lasting Impression, that, *except we repent, we shall still all perish*. If the *thankfulness* of our *Mouths*, be not accompanied with the *real Sense* of our *Hearts*, and a  
suitable



fuitable consequent *Obedience* in our *Lives and Practice*; God can still at any Time commission his *destroying Angel*, to smite us in a Moment. Or, if we continue to

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provoke him, he can inflict Judgments upon us *much more severe* than the most devouring *Pestilence*; by delivering us *into the Hands of MEN*, whose *Mercies are cruel*. He can deliver us up into the *lasting Tyranny* of the spiritual *Babylon*, in whom for many successive Ages has not only been found *the Blood of Prophets and of Saints and of all that were slain upon the Earth*; but by whose *RELIGIOUS Sorceries* also, have all *Nations* been *deceived*: And whose Cruelty has not been more destructive to the *Lives* of Men, than pernicious to their *Souls* also, by *taking away the Key of Knowledge*, and establishing a *blind Implicit Ignorance*, utterly subversive of the very Foundations of all *rational Regard* to God, and of all *Truth, Justice, and Righteousness* towards Men. *Hitherto* it has pleased God, to preserve us from *this* calamity also; from this *severest* of all the divine Judgments; and which, of all others, has the *most nearly* and *most continually* threatned us. For *this Preservation* therefore, ought we *likewise* continually to return our most *solemn Thanks* to the divine Majesty. And 'tis *the more reasonable*

Serm. *reasonable* so to do, because the Calami-  
 IX. ty I am now speaking of, is *that very*  
 ~~~~~ Tribulation, in Comparifon of which our  
 Saviour tells us, that all the Things men-
 tion'd by him in the Text, (*Nation's ri-
 sing against Nation, and Kingdom against
 Kingdom; and Famines, and Pestilences,
 and Earthquakes in divers Places; all
 these, says he) are but the BEGINNING
 of Sorrows.*

The *Manner*, in which *alone* we can
acceptably return *Thanks* to God for all
 his *Mercies* bestowed upon us, and for
averting these and all other his *Judgments*,
 whether they be such as are more imme-
 diately of his *own* inflicting, or whether
 they be such as are brought upon Men
 by the Wickedness and Perverseness of o-
 thers : The *only Manner*, I say, in which
 we can *acceptably* return *Thanks* to the
 Almighty for *any* Blessing, is by having
 our Minds so influenced with a *real and
 lasting Sense* of the Goodness and Mercy
 of God in his Government of the World,
 as that we be thereby led effectually to
obey his Will in the Course of a virtuous
 and religious Life, bringing forth *Fruits*
 meet for the *Acknowledgments* we profess
 to make to him. By *this*, and *this only*,
 can our *Praises* be rendered an *acceptable
 Sacrifice*; Ps. xxxi. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord*
 ye

ye **RIGHTEOUS** for it becometh well the **JUST** to be thankful. But of the *Wicked* it may truly be affirmed, that, as their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomination to the Lord*. Sermon. IX.

But more particularly: If we will behave ourselves worthily, as those who have, *really*, a *thankful Sense* of the divine Goodness in averting the Judgments which have sometimes threatned us; we must, in the

1st Place, as *Believers* in *God*, seriously and sincerely make use of our *Reason*, in banishing from among us that *atheistical Spirit* prevailing among some Men, who, whenever things are seen to proceed from *natural Causes*, immediately thereupon they endeavour to exclude all Consideration of *God*. As if the abstract Word, *Nature*, was a *real intelligent Agent*; or meant any Thing more, than the *usual and ordinary Method* of *God's* governing the World. Which foolish Mistake arises meerly, from Men's not distinguishing the *NECESSARY Nature* of Things, from that *APPOINTED Course or Order of Nature*, which is nothing but the *Will of God* and the *Law of his Creation*. For Instance: That *two and two should make four*, or that *a Body should*

Serm. *should be only in one Place at once, is the*

IX. *NECESSARY Nature of Things ; and*
 ~~~~~ *could not have been otherwise. But when*  
*we say, 'tis the Nature of Corn to grow ;*  
*or, 'tis the Nature of pestilential Vapours*  
*to destroy : In these and the like Expres-*  
*sions, Nature is nothing but the volunta-*  
*ry Appointment of God : And natural*  
*Causes here, do really no more exclude the*  
*Consideration of God, than any one's af-*  
*firming that 'tis the Nature of a Sword to*  
*kill, would be a reasonable and satisfactory*  
*Ground to forbear any further Inquiry by*  
*what Hand that Instrument of Death was*  
*moved. When the Inquiry is concerning*  
*the efficient Agency, by what Power Plants*  
*and Animals are formed, by what Power*  
*Corn grows, or Food nourishes, and the*  
*like : To answer in this Case, that 'tis*  
*their NATURE, or that 'tis natural for*  
*them so to do ; is exactly the same Thing*  
*as if a Man being asked how and by what*  
*Architect a Palace was built, should an-*  
*swer, it was the Nature of it to be built*  
*of such a Form and Bigness.*

2dly. As *Christians ; 'tis our Duty, not*  
*only in general to attend to the Hand of*  
*God in all the Dispensations of Providence,*  
*but moreover to observe distinctly how all*  
*the great Events that happen in the World,*  
*are the Accomplishment of those Things*  
*whereof*



whereof *our Lord admonished* his Disciples from the Beginning; when, in order to wean them from the Vanities of this present World, and to raise their Thoughts to a better, he foretold them of the *great Calamities* which should fall upon the *Earth* by the *righteous Judgment of God*, and the *much greater Calamities* which should be brought upon *them in particular* by the *Malice of unrighteous Men*. See (says he) *that ye be not troubled, for all these Things must come to pass: ---- For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom, and there shall be Famines and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers Places: All these are the Beginning of Sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Sake.* The Application he makes to them of the whole, is, (Luke xxi. 34.) *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

3dly. If we look upon ourselves still more particularly, as Professors of the reformed Religion; the Consideration of every Blessing we receive from the Hand of Providence, whether *temporal* or *spiritual*

Serm. *ritual*, will naturally remind us to express our *Thankfulness to God*, in Ways *suited* to the *Purity of the Religion* we profess, and to the *Knowledge* he has been pleased to vouchsafe us of his *Truth*. We must express our *real Sense* of his Goodness towards us, by sincerely endeavouring to *obey* his *Will*; by departing from every *Kind*, and from every *Degree*, of *Superstition*; by laying aside all unchristian *Heats* and *Animosities* among ourselves, by promoting universal *Peace* and *good Will* among Men; in a Word, by showing that we place our Religion, not in fantastical *Notions* or in empty *Forms*, but in a constant rational *Acknowledgment* of *God*, in an impartial *Love* of *Truth*, and in the habitual *Practice* of *true Virtue*, of *Sobriety*, *Righteousness* and *universal Charity*. This if we do; the Prophecy in the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm, we may (not without Reason) *hope*, even in the *first* and *literal* Sense, but in the *spiritual* and *final* Sense certainly, it shall be fulfilled to US. *Who so dwelleth under the Defence of the most high, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty; He shall deliver thee from the Snare of the Hunter, and from the noisom Pestilence: Thou shalt not be afraid for any Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day: For the*



at St. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

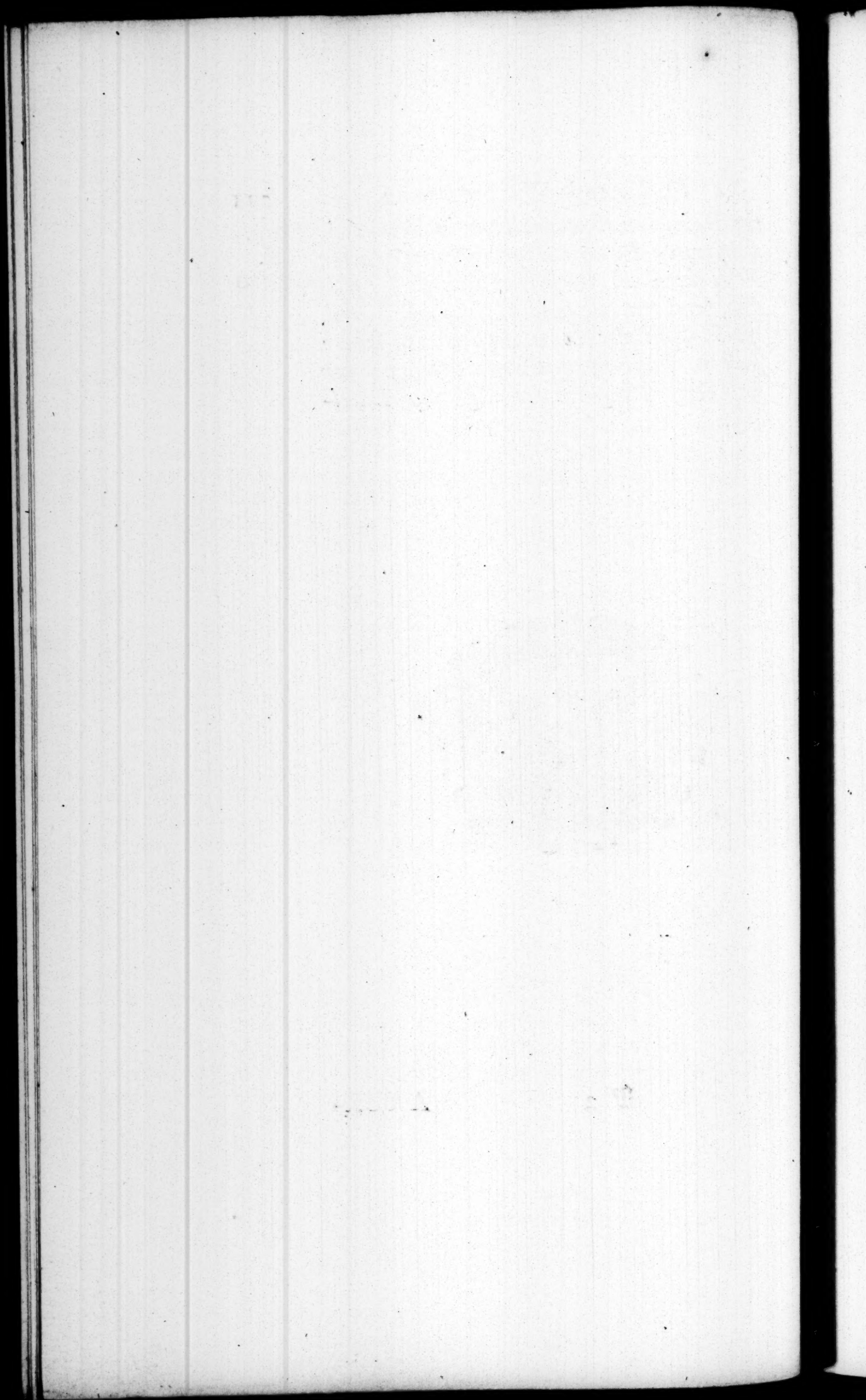
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*the Pestilence that walketh in Darknes, nor for the Sicknes that destroyeth in the Noon-day; A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right Hand, but it shall not come nigh thee: There shall no Evil happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy Dwelling.*

Serm.

IX.







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A  
SERMON

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 31, 1717.

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MATT. xvi. 18.

*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

THE Occasion and Connexion of these Words, is this : Our Saviour, examining his Disciples how far they *understood* the Doctrine they had been taught; asks them, *ver. 13. Whom do Men say, that I, the Son of Man, am?* The very Character he here and elsewhere

Serm.  
X.

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gives

Serm. gives himself, *I the Son of Man*, was a  
 X. sufficiently plain Intimation *Who* he was.

For the Phrase, *THE Son of Man*, necessarily signifies one who is so styled by Way of Eminence or Distinction; and, in Discourse with Persons who had been educated *Jews*, it could not but be understood to refer to the Use of that Title or Character somewhere in the *Old Testament*. Now the Passage where 'tis mentioned in the most remarkable and distinguishing Manner, is in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, ch. vii. 13. *Behold one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven; (The Son of Man, which is in Heaven, as our Saviour styles himself in the Gospel, John iii. 13.) And came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages, should serve him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* The *Jews* all very well knew, that this was a plain Prophecy and Character of the *Messiah*. And therefore our Saviour, by taking upon himself that Title by Way of Eminence, *THE Son of Man*; clearly enough intimated, *whom* he professed himself to be. However, in order to put his Disciples upon a more distinct

stinct Declaration *how far* they had hitherto *understood* him; and thereby to introduce a new Occasion of giving them further and more particular Instructions; he asks them, *ver. 13. Whom do Men say that I am?* The Disciples answered; *Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?* Simon Peter answered, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Then said Jesus unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* That is, the Confession you have made, is not a *bare human Conjecture* or Opinion; as the *Jews* had guessed him to be either *Elias*, or *John the Baptist*, or one of the old Prophets risen from the Dead: But *your* Confession (says he,) is the *very Truth*; which God has enabled you to discover. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter*, *ver. 18.* Thou *Simon* the Son of *Jonah*, shalt for the future be known by the Name of *Peter*, which signifies a *Rock*, a firm and constant, an unshaken and immoveable, Professor of the Truth. 'Tis very usual in Scripture, to give Men in this Manner *emphatical* and *significant* Names. Thus *Gen. xvii. 5. Thy Name shall be Abraham, for a Father of many Nations* (so the Word



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*Abram signifies in the original,) a Father of many Nations have I made thee. Again, Gen. xxxii. 28. Thy Name shall be called Israel; for as a Prince hast thou Power with God and with Men, and hast prevailed. So here likewise, thou art Peter, that is, a Rock; a firm and constant, a faithful and unshaken Witness, Support, and Defender of the Truth. And upon this Rock, upon this Firmness and steddiness of yours in professing and preaching the great Truths of the Gospel, upon this will I build my Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

In order to the fuller and clearer Understanding of which whole Discourse of our Saviour; it will be necessary to explain from the Beginning, the Nature and Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that Metaphor or Figure of speaking, which in numberless other Places of Scripture, as well as in this Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ. 'Tis to be observed therefore, that God having  
antient-

antiently placed his Name in *Jerusalem*, Sermon.  
 that is, having appointed it to be the X.  
 Seat of his Throne and Worship, the  
 Place of Confluence of the Worshippers  
 of the one true God; and thereby made  
 it by Way of Eminence *the City of the*  
*great King, the holy City*; it from thence  
 became, in the prophetick Style and Lan-  
 guage, a Type of *Heaven*. From hence,  
 in the New Testament, the *State of Hea-*  
*ven* is figuratively stiled, *Jerusalem which*  
*is above*, Gal. iv. 26. *Mount Sion, the*  
*heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. xii. 22. And in  
 the *Revelation* particularly, 'tis described  
 at large, under the Notion of a glorious  
 and happy City; *ch. xxi. 10. He shewed*  
*me that great City, the holy Jerusalem,*  
*descending out of Heaven from God; ha-*  
*ving the Glory of God, and her Light was*  
*like unto a Stone most precious:---And*  
*the City was pure Gold;---and the Foun-*  
*dations were garnished with all Manner*  
*of precious Stones.* To which Descripti-  
 on, the Apostle plainly alludes, *Heb. xi.*  
*16. He hath prepared for them a City:*  
 And again in the same Chapter, *they de-*  
*sire (says he) a better Country, that is, an* ver. 16.  
*heavenly:* And, *Abraham looked for a*  
*City which hath Foundations,* (in the ori- ver. 10.  
 ginal it is, *THE City which hath THE*  
*Foundations,*) *whose Builder and Maker*  
*is God.* Hence still further, in Pursuance  
 of

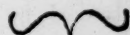


Serm. of the same Similitude, the Church of  
 X. God even here upon *EARTH*, is styled  
 ~~~~~ the City, the Temple, and the House of  
 God. The City of God. *Pf. xlv. 4. The Streams thereof, shall make glad the CITY of God. Heb. xii. 22. Ye are come unto---the CITY of the living God,---the general Assembly and Church of the first-born whose Names are written in Heaven. Also the Temple of God: 1 Cor. iii. 16. Ye are the TEMPLE of God; And 2 Cor. vi. 16. Ye are the TEMPLE of the Living God. Eph. ii. 19. Ye are Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God; and are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone; in whom the whole Building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy TEMPLE in the Lord; in whom you also are build-ed together; for an Habitation of God through the Spirit. And 2 Thess. ii. 3. That Man of Sin,---sitting in the TEMPLE of God; That is, a general Apostasy and Love of worldly Power, over-spreading the visible Church. Lastly, 'tis styled likewise the HOUSE of God: 1 Tim. iii. 15. The HOUSE of God, which is the Church. Heb. iii. 6. whose HOUSE are we. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Ye are God's BUILD-ING. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Ye also as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual HOUSE unto God.*
 And

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And *ch. iv. 17. Judgment must begin at* Sermon.
the HOUSE of God. X.



Now the *Church of God* being thus usually, (upon the Occasion and for the Reasons already explained,) represented in Scripture under the figurative Notion of a *holy City*, or *Temple*, or *House of God*; the several *Parts* of it likewise, in Pursuance of the same Metaphor, are described proportionably under the *like* Characters, and with the *like* Figures of Speech, as the *whole*. Hence the Word *Foundation*, as denoting the most material Part and Support of the whole Building, is elegantly made Use of to signify either such *Men* or *Things*, such *Persons* or *Doctrines*, upon which the whole of Religion mainly relies, and by which it is principally supported.

Sometimes it is applied to *Doctrines*: To denote those *great*, those *Primary*, those *necessary and essential* Doctrines of Religion; upon which, all other true Doctrines are built; without which, Religion cannot subsist; and of which, no Christian can innocently or excusably be ignorant. These are styled, *Heb. v. 12. The first Principles of the Oracles of God*; and *Heb. vi. 1. The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, and *the Foundation*. In modern
Language

Serm. Language, they are usually called *the Fundamentals* of Religion; the Doctrines, wherein *Christianity itself* consists; in Opposition to those, which distinguish from each other the several *Sects* or *Parties* of Christians. In the *former*, consists all true Virtue and Piety : The *latter*, are the Occasions of never-ceasing Contentions, Schisms and Uncharitableness. *What* these fundamental Doctrines in particular *are*, (though St. *Paul* has given us an express Catalogue of them, *Heb.* vi. 1, 2.) seldom any Sect or Party of Christians are willing to define ; because by so doing they would plainly discover, that the Things about which they generally most fiercely contend, are indeed no necessary Parts of Religion *at all*. But in the *Scripture itself*, these fundamental Doctrines are perpetually insisted on; and inculcated, as those on which in reality *the whole* of Religion depends. And the teaching or preaching of these Doctrines, is what St. *Paul* calls *Laying the Foundation*, (*Heb.* vi. 1. And *1 Cor.* iii. 10.) *According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise Master-builder I have laid the FOUNDATION. But let every Man* (says he) *take heed how he buildeth there-upon : For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* The meaning is, no Man can
make

make any Thing else to be *fundamental* Sermon.
in Religion, besides what Christ himself X.
has made to be so. *If any Man build up-*

on this Foundation, Gold, Silver, precious Stones; if he preaches the true Doctrine of the Gospel, and builds thereupon virtuous Practice; *he shall receive a Reward*, ver. 14. If he corrupts the Doctrine of Christ in its essentials, and teaches Men any vitious Practice; he shall be punished very severely. If he builds *Wood, Hay, Stubble*; that is, if he teaches needless and useless, tho' not vitious Doctrines; *he shall suffer Loss*, he shall in great Part lose his Reward: Nevertheless, for the Sincerity of his Intention, *he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire*, ver. 15. The Sense is, *He shall be saved DIFFICULTLY*, as it were out of the Fire; According to the like Expression in St. Jude, ver. 22. *Of some have Compassion, making a Difference; and others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire.*

But further: The Word, *Foundation*, as it is thus sometimes applied Figuratively to *Doctrines* fundamental; so, at other Times, it is in a proportionable Sense, applied likewise to *Persons*. Thus (in the Passage before-cited,) *Eph. ii. 20. Ye are built upon the FOUNDATION of the APOSTLES and PROPHETS.* From
whence

Serm. whence is derived that elegant and lively

X. Description, *Rev. xxi. 14. The Wall of the City had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Jesus Christ himself, is the chief Corner-stone: The Apostles and Prophets, are the Foundation: And the Church or entire Body of good Men through all Ages, are the whole Building or spiritual Temple of God; in which ye also, saith the Apostle, (ye also, as living Stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5.) are builded together, for an Habitation of God through the Spirit. And such Persons as, after the first preaching of the Gospel, were, in a more eminent and illustrious Manner, Promoters of true Religion; are, by continuing the same Similitude, aptly called Pillars, Gal. ii. 19, James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be PILLARS. And Rev. iii. 12. Him that overcometh, will I make a PILLAR in the Temple of my God. Which Passages, by the Way, teach us to rectify a Mistake in the vulgar Interpretation of that noble Text of St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 15. That thou mayst know how to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the PILLAR and Ground of Truth. That St. Paul in one and the same Sentence, wherein he calls the Church the HOUSE of God, should at the same Time style it also*

also a *PILLAR*, which is a *Part* of that House; is very hard to conceive. From the fore-cited Places therefore, and others of the like Import, where the same Word is always applied to *single PERSONS*; it seems very probable, that *here also* it ought to be understood, not of the *whole Church*, but of *one Person* only, even of *Timothy* himself: *That thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God*; that thou mayest know how to behave thyself therein in such Manner, (*as being*, or) as that thou mayst be a *Pillar* and an eminent *Support of the Truth*. The Sense is much more reasonable, and agreeable to other Places of Scripture; and removes a difficult Expression, much abused and perverted by popish Writers to support their absurd Doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church.

Having thus fully and at large explained from its first Original, the Nature and Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that Metaphor or Figure of speaking, which in numberless other Places of Scripture, as well as in my Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ; it from hence becomes very easy to understand the true Sense of these Words of our Saviour, *Thou art*

Serm. *art Peter, Thou art (as thy Name signifies) a Rock; and upon this Rock will I*
 X. *build my Church. The Church is the City, the Temple, the House or Building of God. In this spiritual Temple of God, Jesus Christ himself is the chief Corner-stone, in whom the whole Building is fitly framed together. And the Apostles and Prophets, are the Foundation. Among these, St. Peter having, with a particular Forwardness and Zeal, made Confession of his believing Christ to be the Messiah; was accordingly approved by his Master, and receives the following Answer: Thou shalt be, (says our Lord,) one principal Foundation-stone in my Building. By thy Firmness and Steadiness, by thy Courage, Constancy and Zeal in this Confession, thou shalt become an eminent Founder of my Church, a most successful Preacher of my Doctrine to the World, in the first Age of the Gospel, Thou art Peter, Thou art a Rock; and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*

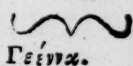
It follows: *And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* That is, Opposition and Persecution, even unto *Death it self*, shall never be able to stop the Progress of my Gospel. The Word, which we here render *Hell*, signifies in the Original, not *the State of the damned*, (for
 'Advs. That

That is always in the Greek expressed by a very different Word;) But the Word here used, signifies always *that invisible State in general* only, to which Death is the Gate or Passage. So that this Phrase in the Text, is exactly of the same Import with those Expressions in the Old Testament: *The Gates of the Grave*, the *Chambers of Death*, and *the Gates of Death*. II. xxxviii. 10. *I shall go to the Gates of the Grave*. Prov. vii. 27. *The Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death*. Job. xxxviii. 17. *Have the Gates of Death been opened unto thee?* Ps. ix. 13. *Thou liftest me up from the Gates of Death*: And Ps. cvii. 18. *They draw near unto the Gates of Death*. When therefore our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*; (for the Word *Hell*, as I now observed, when it means *the State of the damned*, is always in the Original quite another Word :) When, I say, our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*, *shall not prevail against* his Church; his Meaning plainly is the same, as in those other Promises, *Matt. xxviii. 20. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World*; your Mortality shall not put an End to the preaching of my Gospel. And *ch. xviii. 20. Where two or three*, (wheresoever or whensoever, in what Place or at what Time soever in

any

Serm.

X.



Serm. any Age of the World, *two or three*) are
 X. gathered together in my Name ; there am
 I in the midst of them.

Lastly, Our Saviour adds in the *next* Words, immediately following the Text : *And I will give unto THEE the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven : And whatsoever THOU shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven ; and whatsoever THOU shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* The Sense is ; thou shalt first *open* the Kingdom of the *Messias*, and make the *first Publication* of the Gospel to the Gentiles ; (which we read was accordingly fulfilled, in the *2d*, *10th*, and *15th* Chapters of the *Acts*.) And by the Terms of *that Doctrine* which I commission you to preach *on Earth*, shall every Man's Sentence be finally and judicially determined of God in *Heaven*.

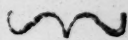
And now, having distinctly explained the full Meaning of our Saviour, in this whole Discourse of his to *St. Peter* ; it will be very obvious to raise from thence the following Observations.

1st, I observe, that according to the true Explication of the Word, it makes no real Difference at all in the Sense, whether by the *Rock* upon which our Saviour
 here

here promises to build his Church, be meant (as *Protestant* Expositors generally understand it) the *Confession* of St. Peter, or (as the *Romish* Writers contend) the *Person* of St. Peter. I say, it makes no Difference at all, as to the true Sense of the Words. For, if this *Rock* be the *CONFESSION* of St. Peter; yet the Application of the Phrase to *him* in so particular a Manner, must needs be with Regard to his *personal* Firmness and Steadiness in that Confession. And if it be the *PERSON* of St. Peter, that is here styled a *Rock*; 'tis still with Regard to his Firmness in that *Confession*. From whence nothing can be collected to the Advantage of the Cause of the Church of *Rome*. For

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2dly, I observe, that the Word *Rock*, the *Foundation-stone* of a Building, a strong or well-laid Support, is not at all (as the Church of *Rome* ridiculously supposes) an Emblem of *Authority*, *Power* or *Domination*; but it signifies *firm* and *constant*, effectual and successful, preaching of the Gospel at the Beginning: Which was the *Foundation* of the Church of Christ. Which *Church*, the Scripture tells us, was built upon the *Foundation* of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*. And in that Foundation, St. Peter was a *Rock*, or a firm and eminent Part of it.

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3dly,

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X.

3dly, I observe, that *immediately* after the speaking of these great Things to St. Peter; our Lord, (as it were with a *particular View* that it might be left upon Record as a Guard against that extravagant Opinion, which he foreknew future Ages, for the Purposes of Tyranny and worldly Dominion would entertain of St. Peter's personal Authority :) our Lord, I say, takes Occasion in his very *next* Discourse with him, to rebuke him with a *sharper Severity* than he ever used toward any of the rest of his Disciples. *Ver. 23. Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an Offence unto me; for thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* And probably for the very same Reason it is, that he was suffered to fall and to deny his Master, more shamefully than any of the other Disciples; and that 'tis particularly recorded in Scripture-history, how St. Paul afterwards *withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed*, Gal. ii. 11. Of the same Kind seems to be our Saviour's *affecting*, as it were, to speak always with very small Respect of the *blessed Virgin: Woman, what have I to do with thee?* And, *Yea RATHER blessed are they, that hear the Word of God, and keep it.* And again, *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren?*

thren?-----Behold, whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother and Sister and Mother.

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4thly, I observe, that as the Word *Rock* signifies nothing of *Authority* or *Dominion*, but a *Stone* or *firm Part* in the *FOUNDATION* on which the Church is built; so it is a *Character*, in which *St. Peter* could not possibly have *ANY* *Successors*; in any other Sense, than in that wherein *he himself* applies it to *ALL* *Christians in general*; in his first Epistle, Ch. ii. 5. *YE also* (saith he) *as living Stones, are built up a spiritual House unto God.* And *St. Paul* to the *Ephesians*, chap. ii. 22. *You also are builded together, upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, into an holy Temple: for an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit.*

5thly, I observe, that what is here said to *St. Peter*, is elsewhere applied equally to *ALL the Apostles*. The *City of God*, saith *St. John*, had *twelve Foundations*, and in them the *Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb*. The Church was built equally upon them *All*. And our Saviour with great Expressness and Earnestness charges them, that there should be no such Thing as *Dominion* or *Prehemi-*

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X.

nence amongst them ; but whosoever (says he) will be great among you, let him be your Servant, Matt. xx. 27. Further : That which is here spoken to St. Peter about having the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, is elsewhere expressly directed to ALL the Apostles : John xx. 23. Whose soever Sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever Sins YE retain, they are retained. The full Meaning of which sublime Expressions, is that not even the Apostles themselves, (much less that any of their fallible Successors,) had a discretionary Power of forgiving or retaining Mens Sins ; but, that they were appointed Preachers and Messengers of that gracious Covenant of Reconciliation, according to the Terms and Conditions whereof, God will either forgive Mens Sins or not. God will judge Men according to OUR Gospel ; or by the Rule of that Doctrine, which we are commanded to preach to the World. St. Paul expresses the Sense of this Trust, with the greatest Exactness of Expression, Rom. ii, 16. In the Day, says he, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to MY Gospel.

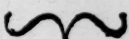
A SER-

A
SERMON
 Preach'd in the
PARISH-CHURCH
 OF
St. James's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 23, 1718.

GEN. XV. 6.

And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.

TH E S E Words are Part of the Serm.
 History of the Patriarch *Abra-* XI.
ham. Who when, in his old Age, 
 being yet childless, he had a Promise made
 to him, that his Posterity should be as the
 Stars of Heaven for Multitude; notwithstanding the natural Improbability of the
 Thing, yet (the Text tells us) *he believed*

Q 4

in

Serm. *in the Lord, and the Lord counted it to*
 XI. *him for Righteousness.* The Words are
 very remarkable: And they are in the
New Testament cited, *three* several Times.
 By the Apostle St. *James*, once: And by
 St. *Paul* twice; in his Epistle to the *Ro-*
mans, and again in his Epistle to the *Ga-*
latians. By St. *Paul* they are cited to
prove, that since *Abraham's Faith* was
 here reckoned to him for Righteousness,
before the Institution of Circumcision;
 therefore *Justification*, or the Favour
 and Acceptance of God, *is not* confined
 and limited to the Observers of the *Works*
 of the *Jewish-law*, but extends itself to
 all Men, of all Nations, who *walk in*
 the Steps of the Faith of Abraham. By
 St. *James* they are cited to *prove* at the
 same Time, that since the Faith of A-
 braham here reckoned to him for Righ-
 teousness, was not a mere unactive Be-
 lief, but an *effectual Principle* of real
 active Obedience; therefore *Justification*,
 or the Favour and Acceptance of God, *is*
 confined and limited, though *not* to the
 Observers of the *Works* of the *Jewish Law*,
 yet *certainly* to the Practicers of the *Vir-*
tue and Righteousness of the Gospel. The
Application of the Words to *each* of these
 Purposes respectively, is as *natural* and
pertinent as possible; and the *Inference*
 drawn from them, in *each Case*, is most
obvious

Rom. iv.
12.

obvious and certain. My Design is not, at this Time, to enlarge any further upon the Manner of reconciling St. Paul and St. James; (which has often been done upon *other* Occasions, and is *sufficiently evident* from the *single Observation* I now mentioned;) but to consider *what* Matter of *Instruction* may be drawn from the *Words themselves*; as they lie before us in the Text; Abraham *believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.*

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Faith, or Belief in God, is the Foundation and Ground of virtuous Practice. And in Proportion as this Foundation is deeply and strongly laid, in the same Proportion will the Superstructure be durable and permanent against the Attacks of worldly Temptations. For though *Virtue is* Virtue, whether there were any God or no; and the doing of what is Right, would be unquestionably commendable, though there were no Reward or Punishment either here or hereafter: Yet, in that Case, the Nature of Things would be absurd; and the System of the Universe would be, in the whole, an inconsistency. For, that *that* which is *Right in itself*, and necessarily *so judged to be* by every *right Understanding*, and which by Consequence lays a necessary and perpetual

Serm. tual *Obligation upon all*; should yet not
 XI. be *finally and effectually supported*; is real-
 ly and truly as *Great an Inconsistency* in
 the Notion of the *Moral Universe*, as if
 in the *natural World* any of the greatest
 and most exquisite Operations, were *with-*
out any Correspondent *final Cause*. By
this Argument therefore the wisest and
 most rational Men in the *beathen World*,
 who had no Assistance of Revelation at
 all, yet worked themselves up to a very
 strong Perswasion, both of the *Being* and
 of the *righteous Government of God*. By
the same Argument the *Patriarchs*, who
 had no *Express* Revelation of a future State,
 yet reasoned themselves into such Acts of
 Obedience towards God, as overcame the
 strongest Temptations in the World. Of
Instances of this Kind, the whole 11th
 Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is
 an affectionate Collection. And the *Ap-*
plication of these *Examples*, to *Christians*
 who profess to have a *more explicit* Know-
 ledge of a Life to come, is Matter of very
 just and severe Reproach. That which
alone falls, *at this Time*, under our Con-
 sideration; and is, more frequently than
 any, insisted upon in many *other* Places
 likewise of holy Scripture; is the *Example*
 of *Abraham*, *Abraham believed in the*
Lord, and he counted it to him for Right-
eousness.

Faith,

Faith, is that Belief of a God; of his Existence, Perfections, Government and Promises; That Belief of Things invisible, and of Things future; which is the proper Motive, whereby virtuous and religious Minds are supported in the Practice of what is Just and Right, in Opposition to all the Allurements, and to all the Threatnings, laid before them at any Time by an idolatrous, an unrighteous, or a debauched World. In Proportion to the Strength or Weakness of this Faith, Minds sensible of the natural and intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, are enabled to resist more and greater Temptations of all Kinds, and thereby to bear Testimony to the Excellency of Virtue, and to cause its Light to shine forth in the World: Which is promoting the Glory of God, and of his Government. These Temptations, are what the Scripture calls the Trial of Mens Faith. And God, when in the Course of his Providence, he permits them to be laid before Men, is in Scripture represented as making Tryal of them thereby. Not for his own Information, who knows perfectly the Hearts of all Men: But for their own Benefit, whose Minds are greatly improved thereby: And for the Advantage of others, who are extremely encouraged by such Examples. It has therefore been the Method

Serm. thod of Providence from the Beginning,
 XI. not only by the *Precepts of Nature* and
 ~~~~~ *Reason*, confirmed by repeated *Revelations*  
 of his Will, and strengthened with the  
 Sanction of *Rewards* and *Punishments*;  
 but by *Example* also upon perpetual Re-  
 cord, of some *Nation*, *Family*, or very  
 eminent *Person*, adhering singly to the  
 Worship of the one true God, and to the  
 Religion built upon that only Foundation,  
 to *enlighten* the World, as it were, by a  
*Light shining in a dark Place* and con-  
 tinually *reminding* them of the *Truth* they  
 have departed from: Calling upon them  
 (in the *Prophets* Expression) by a *Stan-*  
*dard lift up unto the Nations*, and by an  
*Ensign on a Hill*; or (according to our *Sa-*  
*viour's* Similitude) by a *City built upon a*  
*Hill*, which *cannot be hid*; and by a *Light*  
*set on a Candlestick*, which giveth *Light*  
*unto all that are in the House*. Of this  
 Kind, was a *Succession of Families* before  
 the Flood; and the Family of *Noah*, and  
 of *Melchisedec* and *Job*, and perhaps some  
*others* also, and the *Patriarchs* after the  
 Flood. Of the same sort, was the Na-  
 tion of the *Jews*, even notwithstanding all  
 their particular Corruptions, *before* the  
 coming of Christ: And *since* that Time,  
 such also has been the *Christian Church*;  
 in which, notwithstanding the greatest and  
 most universal Corruptions, still the *Pearl*  
 of



of great Price, the Principles of Truth and Virtue, have always more or less shined forth, in *some* particular Places at least, as a Light appearing through a very thick Mist. But that which my present Subject confines me to, is the *single* Example of Abraham: Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness. Serm. XI.

If it be here inquired, with Regard to *this Method* in the Proceedings of Providence; whence it comes to pass that the *Light* of divine Truth, and the *Manifestations* God has been pleased to make of himself to Mankind, have not been more *general* and *universal*: The Answer is; that though in *this*, and indeed in all *other* Cases whatsoever, we know not in *particular* the manifold distinct Reasons of God's Manner of acting, as indeed 'tis impossible we should; yet in *general* 'tis manifest, that *this* Disposition of Things is according to the *Analogy* of God's usual Method of acting in all *other* Cases. It has seemed good to infinite Wisdom to show forth itself, as in forming an unspeakable *Variety* of *other* Beings of all Kinds, so in creating particularly a great *Diversity* of *rational* Creatures, of Angels and Men; endowed with very *different Capacities*, intrusted in  
numberless

Serm. numberless Instances with very *different*

XI. *Talents*, instructed with very *different*  
 Degrees of *Light and Knowledge*; so as  
 to be each of them capable of being called  
 to *Account*, of being *judged* according to  
 their respective *Abilities*, according to the  
*Measure* and *Degree* of their respective  
*Knowledge*, according to the Nature of  
 their several *Stations*, and of the *Talents*  
 in innumerable different Circumstances  
 committed to their Trust. The Case  
 therefore *here* is the *very same*, even in  
 Respect of *natural Reason* itself, as of o-  
 ther *more particular* Manifestations of the  
 divine Pleasure. Both the *one* and the  
*other* have shined forth, only in particular  
*Places*, and at particular *Times*, in dif-  
 ferent *Degrees*; as *Lights sufficient* to di-  
 rect such as were *sincerely desirous* of  
 finding out and following the Truth; and  
 to be a *Testimony* against *others*, who nei-  
 ther *liked* to retain their *natural Knowledge*  
 of God, nor cared to be instructed in his  
*Will revealed*. But this, by the Way.

The *Faith* of *Abraham*, so highly  
 magnified in Scripture, and which (the  
 Text tells us) was *counted to him for Righ-*  
*teousness*, evidenced itself principally in  
 two remarkable Instances, the *one* was,  
 his leaving his native Country at the Com-  
 mand of God, separating himself from  
 the



the idolatrous Nations around him, and going into a strange Land; firmly believing that God *was faithful, who had promised* that his Posterity should inherit that Land; and that from *him*, even when *as good as dead*, there should spring *so many as the Stars of the Sky in Multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea-shore innumerable*, Heb. xi. 12. The other Instance was, that *when he was tried, he offered up his only Son*, in whom alone seemed to center all the Promises God had made him; thus even *against Hope* (as St. Paul most elegantly expresses it,) *believing IN Hope*; and *being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, who quickeneth the Dead, and calleth those Things which be not as though they were, he was able also to perform*, Rom. iv. 17, 18, 21. The Excellency of this Faith, in both these Instances, consisted in this; that it was a Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God, built upon this Foundation; that God who ruleth over all, can and will certainly make good, either in the present or in a future State, all the Expectations raised in the Minds of virtuous and good Men, either by the natural Knowledge of his divine Attributes, or by the revealed Declarations of his Will. And this the Apostle, in each of the forementioned Cases, expressly declares. In the Case

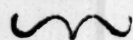
Serm.

XI.

Heb. xi.  
17.

Serm.

XI.



Cafe of *Abraham's offering up his Son*, the Ground he tells us the *Patriarch* went upon, was his Perswasion, that Death itself puts not an End to the Possibilities of the divine Favour; but that God was able to make good the Promises given to him and his Son, even by a Resurrection from the Dead, *Heb. xi. 19.* In the *other* Cafe, that of the *Patriarch's* separating himself from the idolatrous Nations, and going into a strange Country; the Apostle *thus* expresses the Ground and Foundation, on which his Faith was built. *Heb. xi. 8.* By Faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a Place which he should after receive for an Inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. And he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country;---For he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And what that City was, the same Apostle distinctly explains, *ver. 14.* speaking of Abraham and his Posterity: They that say such Things, (*viz. confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth,*) declare plainly that they seek a Country: And truly if they had been mindful of that Country from whence they came out, they might have had Opportunity to have returned: But now they desire a better Country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is  
not



not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City. 'Tis evident therefore that the *Faith* of Abraham, was a *Principle of Virtue* or *Obedience to God*, founded upon the *Expectation* of a *future State*. And because he thus believed God, therefore 'twas counted to HIM; and to all others likewise in all Generations, who shall be governed, as he was, by their *Belief in God*; to them also it shall be counted for *Righteousness*.

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From *this* Explication of the *Nature* and *Excellency* of the *Faith* of Abraham, there may be drawn some very considerable *general Observations*, of great *Extent* and *Consequence* in the *Notion* and *Practice* of true Religion. As

1<sup>st</sup>. From hence we may observe, that *true Faith* is always founded upon *Reason*. Abraham believed, *What?* why, that God would certainly make good to him and his *Posterity*, every Thing that he had promised. And *Why* did he believe *this?* Why, because *Reason* told him, that, whatever *Improbabilities* appeared at present; yet God, who has Power over the *future* as well as the *present* State, was able to fulfil his Promises, even by a *Resurrection from the Dead*.

R

This

Serm. This the Apostle *expressly* observes, upon

XI. that difficult Tryal of his offering up his  
 ~~~~~ Son, *Heb. xi. 19.* He accounted, that God  
 was able to raise him up, even from the
 Dead; from whence also he had received
 him in a Figure. He accounted: The
 Word in the Original is, (λογισάμενος,) he
 reasoned with himself: His Reason satisfi-
 ed him, that the Power of God could
 as easily raise again his Son from the Dead,
 as it had at first caused him to be born
 from one as good as Dead. He had before
 received him as it were from the Dead in
 a Figure, by his being born to him in an
 extreme old Age; and now he doubted
 not, but God could literally restore him
 from the Dead again. This was a Faith,
 truly founded upon Reason. And no less
 reasonable is it in US to believe now, that
 the same divine Power which at first cre-
 ated Men into the present Life, can as
 easily renew them into a life to come. In
 this, there is nothing contrary to the Dic-
 tates of right Reason, or to the Analogy of
 Nature. How different from this, is the
 Practice of those, who under Pretense of
 the divine Omnipotence, require Men to
 profess their Belief of Contradictions; such
 as is Transubstantiation, and the like, and
 all other natural or moral Impossibilities.
 For, to ascribe to the divine Power Things
 that

that are not at all the *Objects of Power*, and to suppose that God *makes* Things to be what at the same he does *not make* them to be; is not *magnifying* the Power of God, but profanely making a *Mockery* of it. *True Faith* therefore, is always founded upon *Reason*. And as, in all other Cases, the Strength of every *Superstructure* is proportionable to the Goodness of the *Foundation* on which it is built: So in Matters of *Religion*, the *Steddiuess* of every Man's *Virtue* is always proportionable to the *Firmness* of his *Belief* of the Principles he acts upon; and the *Stability* of this *Belief*, in Opposition to a careless and negligent *Credulity*, will always be found, upon any difficult Tryal, to be in Proportion as 'tis more or less *reasonably* grounded. For *this Cause* it is, that our Saviour so highly commends the Faith of the *Centurion*, who from the Analogy of his *own* being a *Man under Authority*, and having *Soldiers under him*, reasoned himself into a Persuasion that *Jesus* also was able to heal his Servant, *without coming himself in Person* to visit him: *Verily*, says our Lord, *I have not found so great Faith, no, not in Israel*, Matt. viii. 10. And in like Manner concerning the *Canaanitish Woman*, who from the Similitude of the *Dogs eating the Crumbs that*

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Serm. *fell from their Master's Table*, argued reasonably that she, tho' a Stranger from the common-wealth of *Israel*, yet needed not wholly to despair of our Lord's Favour; *O Woman*, says he, *great is thy Faith*, Matt. xv. 28. Upon the same Ground *the Jews*, who could judge well enough about *other Things*, and argue reasonably about the Tokens of the *Sky* and the *Weather*, and make proper Observations in the Course of the *natural World*; but had no discernment at all, in Matters of *Religion*; are thus reprov'd by our Lord, *Luke xii. 57. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* On the contrary, the *Bereans*, who *searched the Scriptures* carefully, to see *what Reason* there might be for their embracing the Doctrine preach'd by the Apostles; are *commended* thereupon, as being of a more *noble* and generous Temper, *Acts xvii. 11*. And St. Paul arguing to the *Corinthians* concerning a very important Point of Christian Doctrine; *I speak* (says he) *as to wise Men, judge ye what I say*, i Cor. x. 15. This therefore is the *first* Observation, naturally arising from the foregoing Discourse: viz. that *true Faith*, is always founded upon *Reason*.

2dly, A *second* Observation is, that *true Faith* in *God*, never leads Men to the
Practice

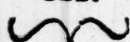
Practice of any Thing, that is essentially and in its own Nature *immoral*. Of this Sort are the *Idolatries* practised in the Church of *Rome*, fundamentally destructive of all both natural and revealed Notions of *God*. Of the same Kind are the *Cruelties* and *Barbarities* perpetually practised by them, fundamentally destructive of all Virtue towards *Men*, and of the very essential, eternal and unalterable Differences of Good and Evil. Things established by the *mere positive Command* even of *God* himself, may, without Controversy, be *changed* by the same Authority that appointed them. Further: Things contrary to *that Part* even of the *Law of Nature it self*, which is founded originally in the *Will of God*, and not in the *Necessary and Essential Nature* of Things; may be done, upon particular and extraordinary Occasions, by the immediate and express Command of *God*. But *that Part* of the *Law of Nature*, which is founded, not on *Will*, but on the very *Existence of God*, and on the *essentially and eternally immutable Nature and Relation of Things*; This is in no Circumstances capable of any Variation. For Instance: That the Life of an innocent Person should be taken away by the Authority of any Power upon Earth, is contrary to the *Law of Nature*.

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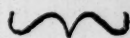
Serm.

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Nevertheless, since the Right which even an innocent Person has to his Life, is not founded in the *essential* Nature of Things, but merely in the *Will* and *Free-Gift* of God; 'tis plain *he* may as justly appoint it to be taken away by any *other* Means he pleases, as by a *Fever* or a *Pestilence*. But had God commanded *Abraham* to forsake the Worship of *himself*, and turn to *Idols*; or had he commanded him to *hate* his blameless Son, or to *take Delight* in *Cruelty*, *Barbarity*, and *Tyranny*; the Command had been, in its Nature, *impossible* and *absurd*. Again: The seven wicked Nations of *Canaan* might, by a *particular* and *immediate* Command of God, as justly be extirpated by the Sword of the *Israelites*, as by an Earthquake, or (like *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*,) by Lightning from Heaven. But that, *without* any *immediate* and *express* Command, and under a *general* Pretence of being alone Possessors of the *Truth*, a *perpetual tyrannical Enmity* should be carried on against *virtuous* Men of all Nations, and a Power established of changing even the *Nature* of *Virtue* and *Vice*; this is a Wickedness which never had an Equal; and subverts fundamentally even *that Part* of the Law of Nature, which is founded, not on the *Will*, but on the very *Being* of God, and
on

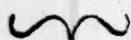
on the *necessary, essential, and eternal* Sermon.
Difference of Good and Evil. XI.



3dly, The *third* and *last* Observation I would here make, is, that *Faith* when spoken of in Scripture as a Moral Virtue, never signifies *mere Belief*; but always includes in it a Notion of *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*; a *faithful* and *stedfast* *Adherence* to such *Principles*, even in Times of the greatest Danger and Difficulty, as are the *Foundation* or *Ground* of *Virtue* and *Obedience*. Abraham *believed* God; (he had *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards God; *adhered* firmly to his *Principles*, and *acted* *steddily* upon them in Matters even of the greatest Tryal and Difficulty: He *kept the Faith*, as St. Paul speaks concerning *himself*; or, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it, he *kept that which was committed to his Charge*;) And therefore *it was counted unto him for Righteousness*: It was *reckoned* to him, it was *allowed to him in his Account*, (so the Word is in the Original;) not, *INSTEAD* of *Righteousness*, but as being *itself real Righteousness*. This Matter is rightly represented by the Author of the Book of *Ecclus. ch. xlv. 19.* Abraham *was a great Father of many People; in Glory was there none like unto him: Who kept the*

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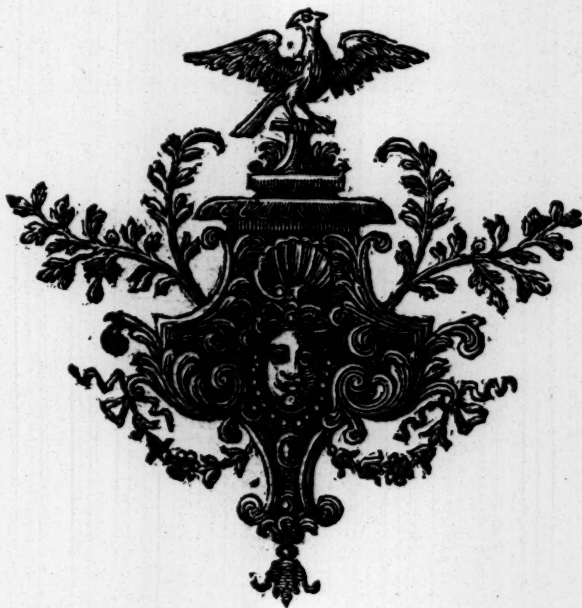
Law of the most high, and was in Covenant with him ;----and when he was proved, he was found Faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the Nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost Part of the Land. And from hence 'tis very evident what the Writers of the New Testament intend, when they declare to us that Abraham, though he was not justified by the Works of the Law, such as Circumcision and the like, because this Testimony was given of him before he was circumcised; yet the Faith by which he WAS justified, was an active and steddy Principle of Works of Righteousness; And by that Faith was he therefore justified, because it was a Faith which wrought with his Works, and by Works was his Faith made perfect. And the Application they make of it to Us, is, that they, and they only, who walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham, are, in the religious Estimation, Abraham's Seed. That is; they only shall finally be accepted of God, whose Faith is, like His, a real Principle of Virtue and Obedience. Otherwise it matters little, whose Name we are called by, or whose Religion we

Jam ii. 22.

at St. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

24)

we profess. For, unless we *bring forth* Serm.
Fruits meet for Repentance; God is able XI.
even of *these Stones*, sooner than of impenitent and incorrigible Sinners, to raise up Children unto Abraham; and unto Christ.



A SER-

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, May 3, 1719.

JOHN vi. 35.

Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.

AS in all Discourses whatsoever, there is no possibility of understanding the Sense of what is spoken, without understanding the Language in which that Sense is delivered: So in *Scripture* particularly, unless Men attend to the Nature of the Expressions therein used, and consider-

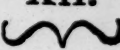
Serm.
XII.

Serm. consider the Figures of Speech, which at
 XII. the Time when those Books were written,
 were as common and well-known, as modern Forms of speaking are at this Day: Unless this (I say) be considered, there is no Doctrine so absurd, but may be proved from the *Words* of Scripture, without Regard to the *Sense*; and no Doctrine so clear, but may be darkned with Scraps of Scripture-Expressions, applied contrary to the Design and Connexion of the whole Discourse. Thus, for Instance, God's *granting Repentance* to Sinners, that is, *granting* them the Favour of having their Repentance and Amendment accepted instead of perfect Obedience; has sometimes been understood in such a Manner, as if God *worked Repentance in or upon them*, as a *Workman* operates upon a *Machine*. Thus, God's declaring the *Christian* Church, instead of the *Jewish* Church, to be for the future his *elect* People; has been thought a Proof of his having chosen *particular Persons* absolutely and unconditionally to *Salvation*. Thus, the Promise of eternal Life to them that *believe*; though the Scripture in numberless Places declares, that thereby is meant *the Obedience* which proceedeth from Faith; has yet been perverted to signify mere *Credulity*, a mere *Profession* of Religion, mere *Zeal* for *particular Parties, Doctrines*
 or

or *Opinions*. And the *Hope of Pardon* Sermon.
to them that *truly repent and reform their* XII.
Manners, purchased by the Blood of Christ; has been turned into a *superstitious Reliance upon the Merits of Christ*, to supply the *Want of Repentance and Amendment of Life*. Again: The Power of *preaching the Gospel*, and the Command to *teach all Nations* upon *what Terms* their Sins should be forgiven them; has been made a Foundation for a *Pre-tence to a Power of forgiving Sins*, upon *other Terms* than those of true Repentance and Amendment of Life. And, to mention but one Instance more; our Saviour's styling himself the *Bread of Life*, giving his *Flesh for the Life of the World*, and saying concerning the Sacramental Memorial of his Death, *this is my Body*; though the *very same Figure of Speech* is used in numberless other Places of Scripture; and though our Saviour himself expressly admonishes us in the Instance of *this very Figure*, Joh. vi. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: the Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life*; yet how often have these Passages been alledged as Proofs of *Transubstantiation*, of the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, of the *Adoration of the Host*, and of other monstrous *Confusions* in the Worship of God! Against this
Evil,

Serm. Evil, there is *no* other possible *Remedy*,
 XII. but studying the *Scripture itself* carefully
 and sincerely; in order to find out the real
Sense and Meaning, instead of abusing
 the *Words* of it. *Other Means* of disco-
 vering the Truth in these Cases, there *can*
be none. *Tradition*, is but a *Fiction* and
 a *Speetre*. *Opinions of Men*, are *Nothing*;
 being infinitely *contradictory* to each other;
mutable as the Successions of *Ages*, and
various as the different *Climates* and *Na-*
tions of the Earth. Only with this Dif-
 ference; that at *Rome* a *tyrannical Des-*
pise of Truth, and a *Contempt of inquiring*
 after it, is greater than ever was in any
 other Place; greater in Degree, and lar-
 ger in Extent; more Authoritative, more
 wicked, and more absurd. But if Men
 would use the *Scripture* as they do other
 Books, studying it without Prejudice,
 looking for the Doctrine of Christ *in it*,
 and not bringing with them their Opini-
 ons *before* they read it; the *Sense* of Scrip-
 ture would be found within itself. *Search*
the Scripture, was our Saviour's Directi-
 on to the Jews, *Joh. v. 39*. And the *Rea-*
son is given by St. Paul, *2 Tim. iii. 16*.
'Tis profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof,
for Correction, for Instruction in Righte-
ousness; that the Man of God may be per-
fect, thoroughly furnished unto all good
Works.

The

The Discourse of our Saviour in this Serm.
sixth Chapter of St. *John* whereof my XII.
Text is a Part; is a most remarkable In-
stance and Proof of what I have now said. 
Never was any Thing more unreasonable
than the Use which has sometimes been
made of such of our Lord's Expressions
as these which follow. *Labour for that*
MEAT, which endureth unto everlasting
Life, v. 27. The BREAD of God, is he
which cometh down from Heaven, and
giveth Life unto the World, v. 33. I am
the Bread of Life; He that cometh to
me, shall never hunger; and he that
believeth on me, shall never thirst, v.
35. The Bread that I will give, is my
Flesh which I will give for the Life of the
World, v. 51. Except ye eat the Flesh of
the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye
have no Life in you, v. 53. And, v. 58.
He that eateth of this Bread, shall live
for ever. Nothing, I say, can be more
unreasonable, than the Use which has
sometimes been made, and that by great
Authorities too, of these Expressions of our
Saviour. And yet if we look over the
whole Scripture, and consider the Phrases
of this Kind, that frequently occur in
reading; 'twill be surprizing to observe,
in how *usual* and *frequent*, in how *ex-*
pressive and *elegant*, in how *natural* and
obvious a Manner, the very *same* Figure
of

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of Speech is made use of, upon a *Multitude* of Occasions. In the following Discourse therefore upon these Words of our Lord, (*I am the Bread of Life: He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst:*) I shall 1st endeavour, from the whole Tenour and Phraseology of Scripture, to explain the Doctrine here laid down; and to give an Account of the particular Figure of Speech, in which it is expressed. And 2^{dly}, I shall make some Observations thereupon, and Inferences from it.

I. In order to explain the Doctrine here laid down, and to give an Account of the particular Figure of Speech in which our Lord has expressed it; 'tis to be observed, that as the *Happiness of Heaven*, and the *final Favour of God*, is by the inspired Writers represented under the Character of *LIFE*, and *everlasting Life*; so, in the *present Time* here upon *Earth*, the *State or Habit of Virtue*, is the *HEALTH* of the *Soul*; And every Degree of *Instruction in the Knowledge of Truth*, and every *Act of Righteousness*, every Degree of *Improvement in virtuous Practice*, is its *FOOD* and *NOURISHMENT*. On the contrary, *Sin* is in Scripture spoken of as a *Disease or Sicknes*; *Is. i. 4. An sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity;*
the

the whole Head is SICK, and the whole Heart faint. And a HABIT of Wickedness is elegantly set forth, as being, in a spiritual Sense, the *DEATH of the Soul*; Eph. ii. 1. *You who were DEAD in Trespases and Sins. A Reformation or Recovery from such a State, is described as a Resurrection from the Dead*; Eph. ii. 4. *God who is rich in Mercy, even when we were dead in Sins, hath QUICKENED us (that is, raised us to Life,) together with Christ. And every Degree of Improvement in the Knowledge of Truth and Right, is, as it were the Support, Nourishment, and Sustenance, of a rational and virtuous Mind.* Deut. xxxii. 2. *My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew; as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass.* And Job xxix. 22. *Unto me Men gave ear;---and my Speech dropped upon them: They waited for me, as for the Rain; and they opened their Mouth wide as for the latter Rain.* To one who considers these and the like Expressions, nothing can be more natural and obvious than our Saviour's Way of speaking in the Gospel after the same Manner: Job. vii. 37. *If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink; If any Man has probity of Mind to receive Instruction, and is desirous to understand*

S the

Serm.
XII.

Serm. the Truth, let him attend to the Doctrine
 XII. of the Gospel. The same Invitation is
 repeated, *Rev. xxi. 6. xxii. 17. I will*
give unto him that is athirst, of the
Fountain of the Water of Life freely. The
Spirit and the Bride say, come, and let
him that is athirst, come; and whosoever
will, let him take the Water of Life free-
ly. In the Prophet Isaiah, ch. lv. 1. The
same Figure is carried still further: Lo,
every one that thirsteth, come ye to the
Waters;-----come ye, buy, and eat; yea,
buy Wine and Milk without Money, and
without Price;----Hearken diligently un-
to me, and eat ye that which is good, and
let your Soul delight itself in Fatness: In-
cline your Ear, and come unto me; hear,
and your Soul shall live. And Prov. ix.
3: Wisdom, (that is, the Doctrine of Vir-
tue and true Religion, of the Fear of God
and the Practice of Righteousness; this
Wisdom) crieth upon the highest Places of
the City: Who so is simple, let him turn in
hither: As for him that wanteth Under-
standing, she saith to him, come eat of my
Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have
mingled: Forsake the Foolish and live; and
go in the Way of Understanding. There
was no Jew in the Days of the Old Te-
stament, but perfectly understood the Sense
of these beautiful and expressive Figures
of Speech; And they are now as obvious
 and

and as plain to be apprehended, (in all Cases where Prejudice and Interest do not interpose,) as the most modern Forms of speaking. Hence a sincere Desire of knowing and doing the Will of God, an unprejudiced Love of Truth, and an uncorrupt pursuing of what is right; is by our Saviour called *Hungring and Thirsting after Righteousness*, Matt. v. 6. And the Perfection of his own Practice, is most emphatically set forth in the following Expression, *Job. iv. 34. My MEAT*, saith he, *is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* In the Book of *Job* it is, *ch. xxiii. 12. I have not gone back from the Commandment of his Lips; I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food.* And in *Jeremiah*, thus, *ch. xv. 16. Thy Words were found, and I did EAT them; thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine Heart.* On the contrary, concerning those who *delight in Wickedness and take Pleasure in Unrighteousness*, 'tis affirmed in Scripture, that *the Soul of the Transgressor EATETH violence, and DRINKETH up Scorning (or Iniquity) like Water.* *Job xxxiv. 7. xv. 16. Prov. xiii. 2.* And any peculiar extraordinary Corruption in the Doctrine or general Practice of any particular Party of Men, is styled the *Leaven of those Men*, or of that

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I spake not to you concerning BREAD, that ye should beware of the LEAVEN of the Pharisees,-- but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees, which (Luke xii. 1.) is Hypocrisy. And 1 Cor. v. 8. Not with the LEAVEN of Malice and Wickedness, but with the UN-LEAVENED BREAD of Sincerity and Truth. By the same Figure of Speech, the Elements or the first plain and fundamental Principles or Instructions of Christianity, are styled the sincere MILK of the Word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and 1 Cor. iii. 2. And a more perfect or improved Knowledge in the Doctrines of the Gospel, is, according to St. Paul's Description, strong MEAT belonging to them that are of full Age, even those who by Reason of Use have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil. Heb. v. 14. The imbibing, digesting, and practising these Precepts of true Religion, is, in our Saviour's Language, the MEAT which endureth unto everlasting Life, Joh. vi. 27. And ch. iv. 14. 'tis the WATER, which whosoever drinketh of, shall never thirst; but, it shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life. To Persons not conversant in the Scripture-Language, 'tis no wonder that such Phrases as these, seem strange and not easy to be understood. But from the Passages before-cited out of the
Old

Old Testament, 'tis apparent they were very *common* Figures of Speech among the *Jews*; and consequently ought to be interpreted according to that Analogy. In the Book of *Ecclesiasticus*, particularly, there is a Passage which gives singular Light to the whole Discourse of our Saviour, whereof my Text is a Part: *ch. xxiv. 19.* Wisdom is introduced, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my Fruits. For my Memorial is sweeter than Honey, and mine Inheritance than the Honey-Comb. They that EAT me, shall yet be Hungry; and they that DRINK me, shall yet be thirsty. He that obeyeth me, shall never be confounded; and they that work by me, shall not do amiss. All these Things are the Book of the Covenant of the most high God. The Phrases; they that eat me, shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me, shall yet be thirsty; signify, in a lively and most elegant Manner of Expression, that the Pleasure arising from the Knowledge of Truth and from the Practice of Virtue, is a Pleasure always New, always Satisfying, and of which a Man can never be Weary. The Phrase used by our Saviour in the Text, (he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst;) though it be very diffe-*

Serm. rent in the *Construction*, yet the *Allusion*
 XII. is plainly the very same, and the *Sense* not
 at all unlike: *Whosoever embraceth my Doctrine, and obeys my Instructions, shall never WANT any Thing necessary to his eternal Happiness; seeing he has the Means which will more certainly support him unto everlasting Life, than Meat and Drink maintains and nourishes the Body in this mortal State.*

This being once carefully observed, there remains no further Difficulty in understanding our Saviour's whole Discourse through this Chapter. His calling himself the *Bread of Life* in the Text, and in ver. 48; the *living Bread*, ver. 51. and the *Bread which cometh down from Heaven*, ver. 50 and 58; plainly signifies this only; that the Belief and consequent Practice of the Doctrine of the Gospel, is the Support and Preserver of the Soul unto eternal Life. His saying, ver. 57. *He that EATETH me, shall live by me*; is clearly explained by the Words of Wisdom, Eccl. xxiv. 21. *They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry*: And by our Lord's own Words in the Text, *He that COMETH to me, shall never hunger; and he that BELIEVETH on me, shall never thirst*: Where the Words, *coming to him and believing on him*, appear evidently, by the Words *hunger*

ger and *thirst*, with which they are joined, to be explicatory of what in the 57th verse is styled *Eating*. And his explaining himself, ver. 29, 40, and 47, manifestly shows the same Thing: *This* (says he) *is the Work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he has sent:----This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and BELIEVETH on him, may have everlasting Life:----Verily I say unto you, he that BELIEVETH on me, hath everlasting Life; I am that Bread of Life.* There remains only one Phrase more in this Chapter, wherein the same Figure of Speech is carried still further; our Lord in the 51st and 53^d and following Verses, setting forth the same Thing under the still higher Figure of *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*, which, in the Text, and in several other Verses of this Chapter, he had before expressed by styling himself *The Bread of Life*. But this also, when that which has been already said be well understood, will have no great Difficulty in it. For as, in the 15th Chapter of this Gospel, our Lord expresses the spiritual Union between him and his Disciples in the following Manner, ver. 5. *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much Fruit:* And as St. Paul without any

Serm. Danger of being misunderstood, sets forth
 XII. the same Notion still more sublimely thus,

~~~~~ Eph. v. 30. *We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh and of his Bones*: So in the Place before us, after our Lord's styling himself the *Bread of Life*, in the same Sense as *Wisdom* in the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* says concerning herself, *They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry*; there cannot, without great Perverseness, be put a wrong Sense upon what he adds, *ver, 56. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*. For, why should not what our Lord calls *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*, be as easily understood of our *imbibing and digesting* his Doctrine, converting it by Way of spiritual Nourishment into the very Habit of our Mind, and into the Practice of our Lives: as St. Paul is by all Men, even of the meanest Capacities, understood without any difficulty to speak in a spiritual and figurative Sense, when he says of all good Christians, that they are *Members of Christ's Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*?

II. Having thus from the whole Tenour and Phraseology of Scripture, explained the *Doctrine* laid down in the Text, and given an Account of the particular *Figure of Speech* wherein it is expressed:



pressed: It remains in the *second* Place, Sermon.  
that I briefly make some Observations XII.  
thereupon, and Inferences from it. And ~~~~~

1<sup>st</sup>. From what has been said, it appears, that in this whole Discourse of our Saviour in *this* sixth Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel, there is no Mention at all made of the *Eucharist* or *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. The Discourse was spoken by our Saviour *long before* the Institution of that Sacrament: And therefore it could never have been applied by any to that Subject, had they not thought the Phrases of *eating his Flesh* and *drinking his Blood*, incapable of being explained to any other Sense. But from the many Passages both of the Old and New Testament, which I have now alledged to this Purpose, 'tis evident that those Phrases, in the *Jewish* Language and Manner of speaking, do very easily signify, the *receiving* and *imbibing*, the *digesting* and *practising* a *Doctrine*: And that the only Reason why our Lord was misunderstood by many that heard him, was that Dullness in some, and that *Perverseness* in others, arising from unreasonable *Prejudices*, which we find him so often complaining of in the Gospel.

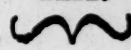
2<sup>dly</sup>.

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2dly. If the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, is not at all spoken of in *this Chapter*; then *muchless* can any Argument be drawn from any Expression therein, in Favour of the *Romish Doctrine of Transubstantiation*. Receiving and *imbibing, digesting* and practising his *Doctrine*; is what our Lord here calls, *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*. And 'tis called so by the *like Figure of Speech*, (though without any *Reference* to each other in this Place,) as is used indeed in the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, and in that of *Baptism* too. The *Bread and Wine*, are not themselves literally the *Body and Blood of Christ*; but the *inward Thing signified* by those *outward Symbols*, is the *Body and Blood of Christ*: Just as, in the *Sacrament of Baptism*, the being immersed in *Water*, is not itself the *Death and Burial of Christ*, but only an *outward Sign*; the *inward Thing signified thereby*, is the being buried with *Christ in his Death*. And the *Body and Blood of Christ*, is verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the *Lord's Supper*; just in the same Manner, as Persons baptised do verily and indeed die and are buried with *Christ*. No Man ever was so absurd, as to understand the *one* literally; and there is no more Reason



son to understand the *other* so: But by *Serm.*  
*both*, Men are intitl'd, if they be worthy *XII.*  
 Receivers, to the spiritual Benefits pur-  
 chased by Christ's Death. 

3dly. From hence we may learn in *general*, how to understand many *other* metaphorical Expressions in Scripture. After the same Manner of speaking, as Christ is here styled the *BREAD of Life*; he is elsewhere styled the *WAY and the Life*, the *RESURRECTION and the Life*, the *Door and the Vine*. He is called the *Word*, and the *Wisdom*, and the *Power of GOD*; and he is called *the Righteousness* (or *Justification*) of *MEN*. He and the *Father*, are affirmed to be *one*; and of *Paul and Apollos* 'tis said, *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one*. The *Eucharist* is spoken of, as a *Sacrifice*; and *Praise* is expressly called a *Sacrifice*; and the *Bodies* of Christians are styled *holy and living Sacrifices*: For no *other Reason*, but because these Things, in the *Christian Institution*, succeeded in the *Place* of the *Sacrifices* which had been offered among the *Jews*. And therefore when some antient Christian Writers style the *Eucharist* an *unbloody Sacrifice*; modern Writers who understand this Phrase in a *literal Sense*, are just as absurd, as if they should

Serm. should understand St. Paul literally when

XII. he calls Christians *The CIRCUMCISION*

*without Hands*; by which *he* plainly means nothing more, but that the *Christian Church* succeeded in the Place of the *Jewish*, who had in the *literal* Sense been styled *the Circumcision*. And by the *same* Figure of Speech; because God who had formerly chosen *Jerusalem* to place his Name there, has now declared that he will be worshipped in *all Places* alike; therefore the whole World has sometimes been elegantly styled, *The TEMPLE of God*; And *every Man*, and *every moral Duty*, is a *Sacrifice* acceptable to him.

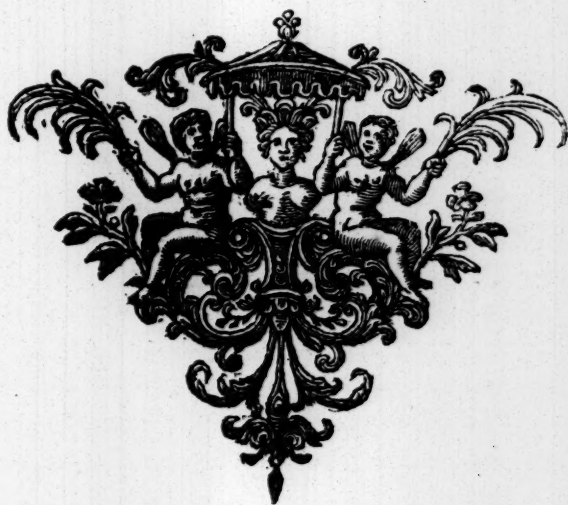
4. *Lastly*: Since these and the like *figurative* Expressions, contain *always* in them a *moral* Meaning and Signification, we ought carefully to observe, that in *this* *their moral Meaning* only, can they ever be of any *Use* to us. *The Flesh*, saith our blessed Saviour, *profiteth nothing*; *the Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life*. The Participation of the *Sacrament*, without true *Faith*; is *Bread*, without the *Body of Christ*. *Faith* itself, without *Obedience*; is (as St. James expresses it,) a *Body without Soul or Life*. *Relying on the Merits of Christ*, without *doing the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*;

Joh. vi.  
63.



Heaven ; can be of no more *Use* to us, than Sermon.  
the *Death of Christ* would have been, if XII.  
there had never been any *Resurrection*. ~~~~~

All great Corruptions of Religion in all  
Ages, have arisen by separating the Letter  
thus from the Spirit ; and in amending  
this Fault, lies the principal Efficacy of  
true Virtue and Goodness.







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A  
**SERMON**  
 Preach'd in the  
 PARISH-CHURCH  
 OF

*St. James's Westminster,*

On Sunday, Dec. 15, 1723.

---

ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath  
 made Man upright; but they have  
 sought out many Inventions.*

**T**IS, not only at this Day, the Serm. XIII.  
 greatest and most difficult Que-  
 stion among *Christians*; but it  
 was so of old among the *Jews* under the  
 Law; and, beyond *that*, even among the  
 wiser *Heathens* also, under the State of  
 Nature; *How Sin and Misery came first*  
*into*

Serm. *into the World*: How *Man*, whose rational  
 XIII. Faculties seem naturally to lead him to discern and choose what is *good*, yet in Event for the greater Part has his Understanding so blinded and apt to be deceived, his Will so biased and inclined to Evil, his Appetites so corrupt and perpetually tempting him to forbidden Objects; his Passions so ungovernable, and unwilling to submit to Reason; that if a Judgment was to be made, not from the *Faculties* of Men, but from their *Actions* only; if we were to take our Estimate, not from the Obligations of our *Nature*, but from the Experience of Mens *Practice*; it might be imagined that, not *Virtue* but *Vice*, was natural to Mankind, and the proper Effect of their original Composition. For otherwise; if *originally* God made Men *upright*, and *Virtue* was naturally most agreeable to their Frame; how then was it *possible* (will it be obvious to ask,) that they could almost universally *seek out* so many evil *Inventions*? And if the *Inventions* they have sought out, are so many and so evil, that they can hardly be conceived to arise but from something faulty in their very *Nature*; how then can it be comprehended, that God nevertheless created them *originally upright*? If *God* be perfectly *good*, (as perfect Goodness is of necessity included in

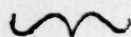


in the very Notion of God;) how is it possible that any of the Works of *his* Hands, should become so *evil*? And if the *Inventions* of Men be so *evil*, as Experience too manifestly declares them to be; how is this reconcileable with a firm Belief, that yet *God*, who made them, is perfectly *good*? When we begin with consulting our *natural Notions of God*, Reason and Demonstration represent him to us of necessity so intirely and absolutely good, that we are apt to expect, *whatever* is the Product of such a Cause, *whatever* is the Workmanship of such an Author, should have impressed upon it no obscure Image, should carry with it no small Resemblance, of the Perfections of its Maker. On the *other* Hand, when we begin with considering Things as *in Fact* they *are* in the World, and observe the extreme Wickedness of the greater Part of Mankind; 'tis then very hard to apprehend, how so very *frail* and *sinful* a Creature, could come out of the Hands of an All-merciful and good *God*. Too hard was this Speculation, for the Philosophy of the heathen World; and it drove many of their Disputants to argue themselves into an Imagination of an irresistible *evil* Cause, in perfect Opposition to, and of equal Power with, the Supreme *Good*. But the Impossibility of two Su-

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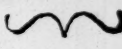
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Serm.  
XIII.



preme Causes, being demonstratively apparent; Others, with much greater and better Reason, resolved all the Evil and all the Wickedness in the World, into the *free Choice* and *voluntary* Corruption of Men, whose Nature God originally had created good. And yet even still a Difficulty remained, *whence* it came to pass, that tho' the *Nature* of Man, as of God's creating, had indeed nothing *actually* in it but good; yet it should be so *frail* and fallible, so *prone* to evil, and so *apt* to be seduced, as by Experience it was found to be. The true Occasion of this, is *briefly intimated* to us in the sacred Writings, in the History of the *Fall of Man*. And evidently there is nothing any Way inconsistent with the divine Goodness in *this*, that God whose inexhaustible Wisdom and Power shows forth itself most properly in producing a never-failing variety of Creatures of different Natures, Capacities, and Faculties; should suffer the *Posterity of Adam* to be of a more frail and fallible Nature, more subject to Temptation and more prone to be deceived, than they would otherwise have been; after their first Parent had forfeited those Advantageous Circumstances of his first Creation, to which he had *originally* no more Right, (but by the free Gift and mere good Pleasure of God,) than he had to the Powers



Powers and Perfections of an *Angel*. And *Serm.*  
*Adam* might with as just Reason have *XIII.*  
 complained against the Goodness of God,   
 because he was not created an *Angel*  
 in *Heaven*; as *we* can, for our not being  
 born in *Paradise*. Nor is it more incon-  
 sistent with the divine Goodness, to suf-  
 fer *us*, in Consequence of *his* introducing  
 Sin into the World to become *more* frail  
 and fallible, *more* peccable and obnoxious  
 to Temptation, than *he* at first was; than  
 it was inconsistent with the same Good-  
 ness, to make *him*, by the *original* Con-  
 dition of his Creation, subject to Temp-  
 tation and to Sin *at all*. In a Word:  
 Either we must be so unreasonable as to  
 assert, that the Goodness of God cannot  
 allow him to make *any* Creature at all;  
 because no Creature can be originally and  
 absolutely incapable of Sinning: Or else,  
 by the same Reason he may likewise, re-  
 concileably with his Goodness, make all  
*Variety* of Creatures, in all the various  
 Degrees of Frailty and Liableness to Temp-  
 tation: Always *excepting* that, of being  
*necessarily* and *unavoidably* Wicked and  
 Miserable; and always *supposing*, that God  
 will finally judge with perfect Equity these  
*frail* Beings, each of them *according to*  
*what he has*, and *not according to what he*  
*has not*. And still *much less* inconsistent will  
 it be with the same divine Goodness, to

Serm. permit the Posterity of a sinful and de-  
 XIII. praved Creature, to continue *by natural*  
 ~~~~~ *Consequence* in a *lower and more obnoxious*  
 Rank of Beings, than possibly they would
 have been placed in, had no such Depra-
 vation been introduced either by our *first*
Parent, or by *any of his Successors*.

Some Writers have indeed, without
 sufficient Warrant from Scripture, carried
 this Matter further ; and have asserted that
 for the Sin of *Adam*, not only himself
 and his Posterity were made subject to
Death, and to all the *Miseries of this mor-*
tal Life, consequent upon the Earth's be-
 ing cursed for his Sake ; and that they be-
 came very *weak* and *frail*, exposed to
more Temptations, and *more* prone to Sin ;
 but that moreover *all Mankind*, for that
one Transgression of their *Forefather*,
 were actually liable to be condemned to
 the *Punishment of eternal Torments* ; and
 were *by Nature* so *Wicked* and so entire-
 ly indisposed to all Good, that the Will of
 Man had thenceforward no more Liberty
 to choose what was Right, than a dead
 Man has Power to restore himself to Life.
 But these Things, the Scripture does not
 teach ; how great soever it represents the
 Depravity of Human Nature. And in-
 deed, to suppose that *God himself* sends
 Men into the World, under an absolute
Necessity

Necessity in their very Nature, of being *Wicked and Miserable*; is not much better, than what some Heathens imagined, of their being made so by the Power of an opposite supreme *evil Principle*. How much more wise and reasonable is the Determination of *Solomon* in the Text: Who in Matters of Difficulty and deep Inquiry, in Things wherein 'tis impossible for the narrow Understanding of short-sighted Mortals to discover the whole Order and Method, the Occasion and Reason of many of the divine Proceedings; advises us to *separate the certain from the Uncertain*; to adhere to what we certainly know to be true, and not be moved from it by the Uncertainty of what we cannot discover! For so he concludes a difficult and profound Inquiry; *Lo, this only have I found.*

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He had been in vain searching into the Depths of Providence, and attempting to comprehend the Counsel of the most high. And indeed, what Wonder is it, that Man, who sees so *small a Portion* of the Works of God from the Beginning to the End, should not be able to comprehend the Wisdom of the *Whole*? *All this*, says he, *have I proved by Wisdom*, ver. 23. *I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me: That which is far off, and*

Serm. *exceeding deep, who can find it out?* And
 XIII. then he concludes in the Words of the
 ~~~~~ Text; *Lo, this only have I found.*

Among the Things impossible to be discovered by human understanding, there is still always *something* certain and to be depended upon; *something*, in which a rational Person may acquiesce and rest satisfied; *something*, on which he may with Confidence fix his Foot. *Lo, this have I found.*

The *particular* Inquiry, upon Occasion of which the wise Man makes this Conclusion, was the Consideration of the Difficulty I now mentioned; *viz.* What might be the *Reason* of the exceeding great Depravity and Corruption of Human Nature; *ver. 25. I applied mine Heart to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom, and the Reason of Things, and to know the WICKEDNESS of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness.* And the Result was: *Lo, This only have I found; that God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

In the Words, we may observe these two Things. 1<sup>st</sup>. A general Direction or Intimation, that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate*  
 what



what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*: And never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *All*. Lo, *THIS ONLY* have I found. 2dly, An *Application* of this general Direction, to that great Question in *particular*; whence the *Corruption* and *Depravity* of *Humane Nature* arises. *This* have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many *Inventions*.

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*First*, Here is a *general* Direction or Intimation; that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *All*. Lo, *This only* have I found. The Works of God, are infinite and boundless; and the Understanding of Man is limited and finite. We cannot therefore comprehend the *whole* Works of God, because our Understandings are *not infinite*; and yet, because we *have* Understanding given us, therefore we *ought* to endeavour to understand them *in Part*. The Scripture frequently declares the Incomprehensibleness of the Works of God: And no where more emphatically, than in this Book of *Ec-*

Serm. *clefiastes. Ch. iii. v. 11. He has made every*  
 XIII. *Thing beautiful in his Time; also he has*  
 ~~~~~ *set the World in their Heart; so that no*  
Man can find out the Work that God
maketh, from the Beginning to the End.
Again, ch. viii. 17. Then I beheld all the
Work of God, that a Man cannot find out
the Work that is done under the Sun; be-
cause though a Man labour to seek it out,
yet he shall not find it; yea further, though
a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he
not be able to find it. And ch. xi. 5. As
thou knowest not what is the Way of the
Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the
Womb of her that is with Child; even so
thou knowest not the Works of God, who
maketh all. Nevertheless, both by Rea-
son and Scripture we are directed to study
the Works of God; that, by what we can
discover, we may learn to admire and a-
dore his Wisdom in what we cannot dis-
cover; and by what we are able to under-
stand, be convinced of the Excellency of
the Things that exceed our Comprehen-
sion.

To instance in *Particulars.* In *what*
Manner this beautiful Fabrick of the
 World was *made*, and *how* the several
 Parts of it in particular were *formed*; the
 greatest Philosophers upon Earth have by
 no Means been able to discover. *This*
only

only have they found, that these Things Sermon.
are evidently the Works of an *intelligent* XIII.
and *powerful* Cause, and cannot possibly
be the Effects either of *Chance* or of *Ne-*
cessity.

In *what Manner* the several Steps of Providence in the *Government* of the World, shall finally be cleared, has been a Thing too hard for the wisest of Men to comprehend, and a Depth inscrutable to the most enlarged Understandings. *This only*, are they well assured of; that *the Judge of all the Earth, will do what is right*; will deal equitably with all Persons, according to their respective Circumstances; and that, at last, *he will conspicuously be justified in his Saying, and be clear when he is judged.*

In *what particular Manner* God's *Fore-determination* of many Events, and his *Fore-knowledge* of all, is reconcileable with that *Liberty* of human Actions, without which there could be no Religion, no Punishment, no Reward; is a Secret which we shall then perhaps clearly and thoroughly understand, when the *Books* of Providence shall be laid open, and the *Secrets of all Hearts shall be disclosed*; when *the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his Saints*, not only to execute

Serm. *cute Judgment upon Men, but also to con-*
 XIII. *vince (as St. Jude expressees it,) that is, to*
 ~~~~~ *satisfy, in their own Reason and Conscien-*  
*ces, all that are ungodly among them, of*  
*their ungodly Deeds which they have un-*  
*godly committed, and of all their hard*  
*Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken*  
*against him. In the mean Time, this only do*  
*we know for certain, and in this may we*  
*with Assurance acquiesce, that God made*  
*not Death, neither hath he Pleasure in the*  
*Destruction of the Living; nor doth he,*  
*by any absolute Predetermination, bring*  
*Wickedness and Misery necessarily upon*  
*any Man; but ungodly Men with their*  
*own Words and Works call it unto them.*

Again: *Wherein the Nature and Dig-*  
*nity of the Person of Christ (beyond what*  
*God in Scripture has thought fit to reveal*  
*to us) precisely consists, and in what par-*  
*ticular Manner those supereminent At-*  
*tributes, which the Scripture ascribes to*  
*him, are communicated to him from the*  
*Father; is what neither Men nor Angels*  
*can perfectly understand. This only may*  
*Christians of all Capacities be assured of,*  
*and may with Confidence depend upon*  
*it; that whosoever imbraces the Doctrine*  
*which our Saviour taught, and obeys the*  
*Laws which he has delivered; and, in or-*  
*der to obtain Remission of past Sins, makes*  
*constant*



constant *Application to God* in *HIS Name* Serm.  
 and through *his* Intercession, as being our XIII.  
*alone Mediatour* with the Father; and  
 lives in constant Expectation of his  
 appearing finally as our *Saviour and*  
*Judge*, to complete our Reconciliation  
 in the Day of Redemption, and to reward  
 every Man according as his Work shall  
 be: Whosoever (I say) heartily professes  
 this Faith, and perseveres in this *Practice*  
 by patient Continuance in well-doing;  
 though he enters into *no* difficult Specula-  
 tions, and confines his Thoughts entirely  
 to what he clearly understands; yet *this*  
 he may be assured of, and abundantly suf-  
 ficient it is, if but *this only* he can find;  
 that (according to the gracious Terms of  
 the Gospel-Covenant) he shall certainly be  
 Partaker of the Salvation purchased by  
 the Son of God, *manifested in the Flesh*.

*Lastly*; To give but one Instance more,  
 (which is *that* alluded to by *Solomon* in  
 the *Text*;) *How* it comes to pass, that in  
 a World created by infinite *Goodness*, and  
 governed by the Providence of the same  
*good God*, yet *Wickedness* should abound  
 so universally as it does; and our first Pa-  
 rents introducing Sin into the World,  
 should be permitted to have so great and  
 lasting an Effect, that many Men *seem* as  
 it were *originally* and *almost naturally* to  
 have

Serm. have strong Inclinations to Vice; though  
 XIII. something has already been offered, and  
 ~~~~~ more will be said in the following Part of  
 this Discourse, to explain this Difficulty
 in some Measure; yet, unless we knew
 the *whole Series* of Providence from the
 Beginning to the End, from the Creation
 of the Universe to the final Consummation
 of all Things; 'tis no great Wonder we
 should not fully understand the whole
 Counsel of God, nor be able, in this *very*
short and imperfect State, to search out to
 the Bottom so unfathomable a Depth.
This only do we find demonstrably certain;
 as being both clear in the *Reason* of Things,
 and most expressely moreover declared in
Scripture; (and abundantly sufficient it is,
 for our present Satisfaction;) that, what-
 ever Difficulties may *now* arise in this Mat-
 ter, yet *in the End* it shall appear to the
 Conviction of Sinners, (so that every *Mouth*
shall be stopped before God; stopped not by
Power, but by the *Reason of the Case*; and
 every *Tongue* shall confess his Justice,)
 that God did *make Man upright*; only
they themselves have sought out many In-
ventions.

In these and numberless other Instan-
 ces, appears the Reasonableness of the *ge-*
neral Direction or Intimation given us in
 the Text; that, in *all Questions of Diffi-*
culty

culty whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *certain* from that which is *uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *all*. Lo, *this only have I found*.

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In *finite* Understandings, which are not capable of comprehending *all* Knowledge, nor of discovering *all* Truth; 'tis the highest Improvement they can arrive to, and deserving the greatest Commendation, to be able rightly to distinguish what they *can*, from what they *cannot* discover; and so to rest satisfied and acquiesce in what they find, as not to entertain any Doubt concerning the Certainty of *one* Truth, because of the Uncertainty they chance to meet with in *another*.

If we find by strong and undeniable Arguments; that the beautiful *Order* of the several Parts of the World, could not possibly arise from *Chance*; nor the infinite *Variety* of Things therein, from blind and unintelligent *Necessity*; nor the exquisite *Fitness* wherewith every Thing is adapted to its proper End, from any *other Cause* than the Will and free Operation of an All-powerful and All-wise Being; Is not *this* sufficient Satisfaction to a reasonable Mind, though he cannot comprehend

Serm. comprehend the *Manner* how each particular
 XIII. was formed? Or, because there are *some*
 Things, which, for *what End* they were
 made, our narrow Understandings cannot
 discover; is there *therefore* from thence
 any Colour of Reason to doubt, whether
 any Thing was made for *any End at all*.

In like Manner, if we find by evident
 Demonstration, that he who in the Be-
 ginning *made* the World by his *Power*,
 cannot but *govern* it unto the End by his
Providence; is not *this* sufficient to satisfy
 a rational Person, tho' he cannot at pre-
 sent account for *all* its Proceedings? Or,
 is it in any Degree reasonable, because the
 Counsels of a great Prince *before* they are
 entirely put in Execution, are above the
 Comprehension of a mean Person; that
therefore that mean Person should conclude
 the Counsels of the Prince to have *no Wis-*
dom in them, or should doubt whether he
 had *any Counsels* or *Designs* at all.

Again: If we are by Experience as much
 assured of the *Liberty* of our *Wills*, as we
 are of the *Truth* of our *Understandings*,
 or the *Reality* of our *Senses* themselves;
 and have the same Thing moreover con-
 firmed to us, by all the *Promises* and all
 the *Threatnings* of God; and that the di-
 vine *Fore-knowledge* is no *Fore-determi-*
nation

nation of our Actions, but only an *unerring Judgment*, or such a *Kind of Prescience* (whatever *that* be,) as is consistent with *Liberty*, and necessarily *presupposes* the *Liberty* of those Actions which are foreknown to be free; have we not abundantly wherein to acquiesce, tho' we know not the particular Manner of the divine *Fore-knowledge*? Or, because there is some *Uncertainty* in the *particular Manner* of reconciling it with human Liberty, is there *therefore* any Reason to call in Question the *Thing itself*, which of all others is the most absolutely *certain*? and pretend to doubt whether we have *any Liberty*, that is, whether there be *any* such Thing as *Religion*, any such Thing as *Reason*, any *Understanding* in Man, or any *Power of acting* at all?

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Further: If we are assured by a clear and distinct Revelation, that God has sent his *Son* into the World, to teach us our Duty, and set us an Example of practising it; to *die for the Sins*, and *rise again for the Justification*, of all who shall *effectually* repent and *reform their Manners*; to make Intercession for us at present, and bring us hereafter unto Glory: Is not *this* sufficient to all the Purposes of Religion and Happiness, tho' we understand not the *Manner* of his *Generation* from the

Begin-

Serm. Beginning, nor *what* the Particulars of
 XIII. *that Glory* were, *which he had with the*
 ~~~~~ *Father before the World was?* Or, be-  
 cause reasonable Men do not take upon  
 them to *define*, (as the *Schoolmen* have  
*presumptuously* done,) *how and in what par-*  
*ticular Manner* our Lord was before all  
 Ages *the Brightness of his Father's Glory*  
*and the express Image of his Person*; is  
 there *therefore* any Reason to doubt, whe-  
 ther we have any *Saviour*, any *Religion*,  
 any *Hopes of Happiness* at all?

Lastly; If it be clearly demonstrable by  
 right Reason, and moreover asserted in  
 express Words of Scripture, *that God has*  
*made Man upright, but they themselves*  
*have sought out many Inventions*: Have  
 we not wherein to acquiesce, tho' *this*  
*only* be all that we *have found*; and we  
 do not perhaps distinctly understand the  
 Reason, *why* the All-wise Governour of  
 the World, has thought fit to *permit* Men  
 thus to corrupt themselves? And this  
 brings me to the

*Second Particular* I propos'd to speak  
 to; namely, the Application of the *gene-*  
*ral direction* I have been hitherto discour-  
 sing upon, to that great Question *in par-*  
*ticular, whence* the Corruption and De-  
 pravity of Human Nature arises. Lo,  
*this*



*this only have I found, that God has made* Sermon.  
*Man upright, but they have sought out* XIII.  
*many Inventions.* But the Time not per-  
 mitting to enter upon this, I shall con-  
 clude at present with two very brief *Infer-*  
*rences* from what has been already said.

The *FIRST* is; that the Rule laid down in the foregoing Discourse, extends only to the *express Revelations* of God, and not to any Doctrines or explications of *Men*.

The *SECOND* is; that, from what has been said, we may see the great Unreasonableness of *Scepticism* in Matters of Religion; and the Absurdity of those, who from the *Uncertainty* of some Questions of great *Difficulty* and of *small Consequence*, would draw Reasons for doubting in Matters of the *greatest Certainty* and of the *utmost Importance*. In Questions of *Natural Philosophy*, Men do not so argue: In the Management of *worldly Affairs*, they do not so act; but *separate* always what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*: And the *uncertainty* of one Thing, does not hinder them from relying, in all the Business of Life, upon the unquestionable *Certainty* of another. There is the same, nay much stronger Reason, why they should act in like manner in Matters

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Serm. XIII. *of Religion: Where that which is of the greatest Importance, is always of the greatest Certainty; and whatever is less certain and more difficult to be understood, is also always proportionably of less Moment. We have upon this Head, the final Advice of Job, and the last and most considerate Words of Solomon. The former of whom, concludes his Discourse concerning the uncertainty of all other Knowledge, with this admirable Reflection, Job xxviii. 28. And unto Man he said; the Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom: and to depart from Evil, is Understanding. The latter having in a whole Book elegantly represented the Confusion and Uncertainty of all human Affairs, sums up his whole Discourse in this wise Admonition, Eccles. xii. 13. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole, the whole Duty and the whole Happiness, of Man.*





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A  
**SERMON**  
 Preach'd in the  
 PARISH-CHURCH  
 OF  
*St. James's Westminster,*

On Sunday, Dec. 22, 1723.

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ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath  
 made Man upright; but they have  
 sought out many Inventions.*

**T**HE Book of *Ecclesiastes* is a Col-  
 lection of the general Conclusions  
 drawn by *Solomon*, from his Ob-  
 servations upon Human Nature, and on  
 the State of the World. He was a Per-  
 son, of whom the Scripture says, that  
 God gave him *Wisdom and Understanding*  
 exceeding

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*exceeding much; such as none of the Kings had, that were before him; neither shall there any after him, have the like;* 1 Kings iv. 29. and 2 Chron. i. 12. His own Experience of all the Injoyments of Life, and his high Station in the World, gave him the greatest Opportunities, and the largest Field, to improve his Understanding by the *most general Observations*; and to make the truest Judgment of the *real Value*, of every Thing in the World. *I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem; and I gave my Heart to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all Things that are done under Heaven, ch. 1. ver. 12. I communed with mine own Heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great Estate, and have gotten more Wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge; and I gave my Heart to know Wisdom, and to know Madnes and Folly, ver. 16. The Result of all was, that he found every Thing to be Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit. That, even in Wisdom itself, is much Grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow. That Laughter and Joy, is Madnes; and Mirth, what Benefit is there in it? That, when Goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the Owners thereof,*



of, saving the beholding of them with their Eyes? That he considered all the Oppressions that are done under the Sun; and behold, the Tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no Comforter; and on the Side of their Oppressors was Power, but they had no Comforter. That, with Respect to the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, MAN also knoweth not his Time; but as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil Time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. That, notwithstanding this, yet the Hearts of the Sons of Men were full of evil; and Madness is in their Heart while they live; and after that, they go to the dead. That he applied his Heart to know and to search out the REASON of these Things; and to know the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness. That all these Things he proved by Wisdom, and said he would be wise, but it was far from him; for, that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? The Particulars were impossible even for his Understanding to discover. But, in general, this he was sure of, that God was true, tho' every Man was a Liar; that God was righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works; and Man, the Cause of all his own Misery.

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*Lo, this only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

In the Words, I have observed these two Particulars. 1<sup>st</sup>, A *general* Direction, or Intimation; that in all Questions of Difficulty whatsoever, we ought always to *separate* what is *Certain*, from that which is *Uncertain*; and never look upon it as a sufficient reason to depart from *One Truth*, that our Faculties do not inable us to discover *All*. *Lo, This only have I found.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, An *Application* of this *general* Direction, to That great Question *in particular*, *Whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *This only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> of these, I have already discoursed upon. It remains that I consider at This time, (2<sup>dly</sup>) the *Application* the Wise man makes of this *general* Direction, to That great Question *in particular*, *Whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *This only have I found, that God has made Man Upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* Now there is in *this*, as in most other Questions, something that is  
*Uncertain*



Uncertain and Difficult to be explained; something that the Understanding even of *Solomon himself* could not attain to; something, that 'tis not *possible* for us to find out, nor *needful* for us to desire to know; something, that is to be resolved perhaps into the mere *good pleasure* of God; or rather into Reasons (for God does nothing *without* reason,) which *We* at present are *not at all* capable of judging of; *why* God in his infinite Wisdom thought fit, among that immense and boundless Variety of his Works to make Some Creatures of such a *particular degree* of Capacity and Understanding, so frail, so fallible, so liable to be seduced and corrupted, as Mankind is. To *this part* of the Question 'tis sufficient to reply with the Apostle; *Shall the Thing formed, say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? That is, Hath not God a Right to make what Variety of Creatures, and of what different Capacities, he pleases? But then there is also on the other hand* something in the Same Question that is very *Certain*, something that is *infallibly true* and may be depended upon, something in which a reasonable Mind may *acquiesce* and rest satisfied;

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Serm. *viz.* that though God *has* indeed made us  
 XIV. *frail and fallible*, yet he has not made us  
 necessarily *Wicked*; He has made us, sub-  
 ject and liable to *Temptation*, but not of  
 necessity Slaves to *Sin*. That we are *Ca-  
 pable* of Corrupting ourselves, *is* indeed  
 the Consequence of that Nature which  
 God has given us; But all *Actual* Corrup-  
 tions, are the Effects of our *Free Choice*,  
 and the Fruit of *our Own* Inventions. God  
*has made man upright, but They have  
 sought out many Inventions.*

Of This Declaration of the Wise man,  
 there are two parts. 1<sup>st</sup>, A justification  
 of God, from all possibility of being charg-  
 ed with the Sins of Men: *God has made  
 Man upright.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, A confession, that  
 the Sin and Misery of *Men*, is wholly  
 owing to themselves: *But they have  
 sought out many Inventions.*

I. Here is a justification of God, from  
 all possibility of being charged with the  
 Sins of Men: *God has made man Upright.*  
 Could wicked Men with any truth affirm,  
 that Wickedness was the Fault of their  
*Nature*, and not merely the Corruption  
 of their *Will*; it would be a just Excuse  
 both in the Sight of *Men* and before the  
 Tribunal of *God*, to alledge that they  
*Were* only what God made them, and  
 what



what they could not but of Necessity be. Sermon.

There is nothing therefore more constant- XIV.

ly and sollicitously inculcated in Scripture upon all Occasions, than that Mens destruction is of *themselves*, and not the Appointment of him that made them. And upon *this* are grounded all the *Promises*, and the reasonableness of all the *Threatnings* of God. But though Wickedness is *not* Mens Nature; yet Weakness and Temptation, and Liableness to Sin, is. And the very Nature of a Probation-State, the Promises of Reward to Obedience, and the Threatnings of Punishment to them that shall comply with Temptations; *supposes* men to be *Capable* of being corrupted, and to be always in *danger* of being seduced into Sin.

'Tis evident therefore, 1<sup>st</sup>, that God's having made Man *upright*, does not signify his having made him *incapable* of Sin, or exempt from all Temptation. No: This is perhaps a State that no Creature ever was, or can be, created in. For *he chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight*. Not only the Angels that *fell*, and incurred irrecoverably the final Wrath of God, appear evidently to have been created capable of Sinning: But the *good* Angels themselves, who kept their first Estate, and never

Serm. never forfeited their Title to the Divine  
 XIV. Favour; even *These* the incomprehensi-  
 ~~~~~ ble Purity of the Holy One charges with  
 Folly. And nothing is perfectly faultless
 in the All-seeing Eyes of Him, who alone
 is Goodness and Holiness it self. And in-
 deed, could any Creature be made origi-
 nally and absolutely incapable of sinning;
 there would be no Room for Trial, there
 could be no Probation, there could be no
 Obedience, and no Reward: But the Hap-
 piness which such a Creature would in-
 joy, would be by Nature compleat and
 indefectible, like to the Happiness of God
 Himself. Which is inconsistent with the
 Nature of a Created Being.

2dly, Therefore; Neither from This
 expression of God's having made Man
upright, ought it to be imagined, that
 God originally created *Man* in That Ex-
 cellency of Nature, which *Angels*, who
 yet were liable to Sin, were at first endued
 with. There is a *proper* Excellency, pe-
 culiar to every Species or Kind of things.
 And as, in the *Natural World*, God cre-
 ated every thing perfect in its kind; and
 beheld, when he had finish'd it, that it was
 very good; And yet One thing, though
 perfect in its Order and Degree, is never-
 theless very far from equalling the Per-
 fections of Another, that belongs to the
 more

more exalted Rank of a nobler Species : Sermon.
So, in the *Moral World* of rational and XIV.
intelligent Creatures, there are Capacities
and Faculties, there are Perfections and
Excellencies, *peculiar* to every Sort of
Beings, and appportionate to their proper
Subject. And as we always understand,
when we say God has given to such or such
a person, Wisdom, Understanding, and
Knowledge; As we always (I say) under-
stand thereby, that he has indued That
Person in a remarkable manner with the
Knowledge and Wisdom of a *Man*, not
with That of a Superior and more Power-
ful Spirit : So, when the Preacher declares
in the Text, that God did make Man *up-
right*; 'tis manifest it must be understood,
that he created him with the *Uprightness*,
not of an *Angel*, but of a *Man*; with *such*
an Uprightness, as is compatible to a frail,
mortal, and fallible Creature.

3dly, Further yet; Neither can the
Words of the Text be so interpreted, as
if *Solomon* meant to speak of *That parti-
cular Uprightness*, wherein our first Pa-
rent was created in *Paradise*; in oppo-
sition to *that general State of Corruption*,
which has ever since prevailed in the
World. For he does not insist upon
This, that God created our *first Parent*
upright; but upon *This*, that, notwith-
standing

Serm. standing all that *can be said* of the Mean-
 XIV. ness and Frailness of our Nature, not-
 withstanding all the disadvantages we *can*
 alledge our selves to lie under in consequence of Sin having been brought into the World; yet *still* God has made *Man* upright. *Man*; That is, the *Species* or whole Race of *Men*: All those particular *Men*, who in the following Words are said to *have sought out many Inventions*. The Uprightness therefore here spoken of, cannot be *That original* Uprightness, which was forfeited by the Sin of our first Parent; but *That continued* Uprightness, with which every man Now comes into the World, notwithstanding the Fall; *That* Uprightness, which every wicked man, in his own proper Person, is justly condemned for voluntarily departing from, by *seeking out* and following his own evil *Inventions*. And *This Uprightness*, which belongs even to *Fallen* Man, and which is necessary to discharge God from the Sins of Men, consists in *This*; That, notwithstanding all the *Weakness* and *Infirmity* of our Nature, which God, who considers that we are but Dust, readily allows for; and, notwithstanding all the *Consequences* of the Fall of *Adam*, which are abundantly provided against by the Death of *Christ*; and notwithstanding all our *Temptations*, and all our prone-
 ness

ness to Sin: Yet no man is under a *Necessity* of being Wicked: No man can say 'tis the Fault of God's Creation, no, not even of *that frail Nature* which he receives from *Adam*, but the Wicked Choice of his own unreasonable Will, that makes him *live vitiously*, and comply with those Temptations which in this frail State naturally and perpetually surround him. That we are perpetually *liable to Temptation*; is indeed the weak Condition of our Nature, and the Unhappiness of our present State. But *Temptation* is not *Sin*; And being *tempted*, is not inconsistent with *Uprightness*: That is, 'tis not inconsistent with *such Uprightness*, as God expects of us in this very frail, fallible and imperfect State. Did God *now* require of us the Uprightness of *Angels*, or even the Uprightness which our *First Parents* ought to have maintained in Paradise; we might perhaps have had reason to complain, that the Abilities of our Nature were not answerable to what was expected from us. But since the Obedience and Holiness required of us, is only of the *same Kind and Proportion*, with *that Uprightness* our Nature *still* retains ever since the Fall; 'tis evidently not the Fault of *God*, nor of that *Nature* he even *Now* gives us, but the wicked *Inventions* only of our own Hearts,

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Serm. Hearts, that make us wicked and miserable.
 XIV. God has given us *Eyes* to discern the Light, *Understanding* to distinguish between Good and Evil, a *Will* whereby we are inabled to choose the One and refuse the other. And in the *Truth* or *Reality* of these Faculties, not in the *Perfection* of them; that is, not in their being such as *CANNOT* be deceived or imposed upon, but in their being such as *do not necessarily deceive US* without our own Negligence and great Fault; in *this* consists the Uprightness wherewith God now sends Men into the World, even since the Fall.

There is only *One* great Objection, against what has been hitherto offered upon this Head. And that is, that the Doctrine of *Original Sin* has by Divines sometimes been so explained, as if Man, since the Fall, had no remains left of those Powers and Faculties, which alone distinguish him to be a free and rational Agent. Which Explication if it were true, 'tis Evident the *Sins of Men* would indeed immediately become chargeable upon *God*. And, far from making Man *upright*, as *Solomon* affirms; it would on the contrary be true, that he now makes Men *not so much as capable* of any Religion at all. For the clearing of this
 Prejudice

Prejudice therefore ; we need only here, as in all *other* Difficulties, *separate* the *Certain* Doctrine of Scripture, from the *Uncertain* Explications of Men : And then the whole *Ground* of the Objection, will be taken away. Now *All* that the Scripture teaches concerning this Matter, is contained in what it affirms, *1st*, Concerning the *Transgression it self* of our first Parents ; and *2dly*, Concerning the *Consequences* of that Transgression, to them and their Posterity.

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XIV.

1st, The History of the *Transgression it self* of our first Parents, is related very briefly in the third Chapter of *Genesis*. And though neither there, nor elsewhere in Scripture, it is called by that Name ; yet it may very properly be called the *Original Sin of Men* ; because it was the first introducing of Sin into this World ; and, before it, there was no such thing as Sin upon Earth. The *Original Sin of Men* therefore, was the *Actual Sin* of our first Parent ; But it could not be the *Actual Sin* of any other Person, because it was committed before any other had a Being. To affirm that the *first actual Sin* of *Adam*, was *Imputed* to all Mankind as well as to him ; is to affirm what the Scripture does not teach. And besides ; if, to impute to *other Persons* the

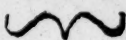
Serm. the *actual Sin* of *One*, be to account it
 XIV. *Theirs* as well as *His*; 'tis evident this is
 impossible with God, who cannot account
Sin, or *any thing else*, to be what it is
 not.

But 2dly, Though the *Actual Transgression* of our first Parent, was *His* only, and not *Ours*; yet there are the *Consequences* of thus introducing Sin into the World, which are common to *Him* and his *Posterity*. And these are, *Mortality*, *Exclusion out of Paradise*, the *Miseries of the present Life*, and a *greater Liability and stronger Temptation to Sin*, in their corrupt *Affections*. God threatened *Adam*, that in the Day he eat of the forbidden Fruit; that is, whensoever he should knowingly *presume* to do what God had thought fit to *forbid*; he should *surely die*. And had that Threat been *immediately* executed, 'tis plain his *Posterity* could have had no Being at all; and as plain, that no Injustice could thereby have been done to *them*, who never *Were*. But the Mercy of God granted *Adam* a Reprieve; and, instead of *dying* immediately, he *only became Subject to Mortality* by his Sin. That is; being now excluded from the Benefit of the *Tree of Life*, (which was a *Means* or an *Emblem of Immortality*,) consequently his *natural Mortality*

Mortality must of necessity *actually* take place upon him. And so it must likewise upon all his Posterity. In which matter; since it was merely the Effect of God's Mercy towards *Adam*, to permit us a possibility of beginning to live; it cannot be thought unjust, that he should appoint us to die. Especially since *that Death* which was introduced by *Adam*, (and *whatever* would have been the Consequences of it in the *future State*,) was as universally removed by the *second Adam*, (who is the Lord from Heaven,) as it spread universally after the Transgression of the *first*. For *as in Adam all die*, (all Men are made mortal;) *even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, (shall be restored from that natural Mortality,) *Rom. v. 22.* And *as, by the offence of One, Death came upon all Men to Condemnation*; *even so by the righteousness of One, the free Gift is come upon all Men to justification of Life*, *ver. 18*; that is, to a Possibility again of obtaining *eternal Life*.

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As to the *Exclusion out of Paradise*, and the *Miseries of the present Life* consequent upon God's cursing the Earth; they are, with regard to the *Posterity of Adam*, only *natural and necessary* Consequences of his losing those free Gifts and Favours of God, which neither *They*

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nor

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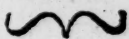
nor *He* ever had any Claim of Right to injoy. And, after all; the miseries Men bring upon themselves in this World by their *own Sins*, are much greater than those they suffer in Consequence of the Transgression of *Adam*. For, notwithstanding God's Curse upon the Earth, the Condition of Men would be in many Degrees better than it is; nay, even very tolerable; did it not perpetually happen, that One Man's Sin makes him a Tyrant to Others, and an Enemy to himself. And that *Men*, who have their *Beings* through Mercy, should undergo the *natural Calamities* of this *mortal* State; cannot be unjust with God, any more than that they should at all be *born Mortal*. Nor can *any Reason* be given, why God might not have made Men *at first* to live but such a certain Number of Years as they *Now* do, if he had so pleased; nor why he might not *originally* have put them into the World with only *such a Proportion* of Good to be injoyed by them, as virtuous and good Men may *Now* enjoy in this World, if all Men were truly virtuous and religious.

Lastly; As to the *Temptations and Liableness to Sin*, which are greater and stronger since the Fall, through Mens corrupt Affections; they are by no Means inconsistent

consistent with *that Uprightness*, which I am now speaking of. For *Temptation* is not *Sin*, but the *Tryal* and the Occasion of *Virtue*. And God, who knows how to make just *Allowances* for every one's Case, with the most exact Proportion and Equity; may prove the sincere Obedience of his Creatures, by what Tryals and Temptations he himself, in his All-wise Government, thinks fit to permit. In all which, 'tis certain that God makes no Man *Wicked* by *Nature*; but every Man *then* sinneth, *when he is drawn away of his own Lust and inticed*. For, *when Lust has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when 'tis finished, bringeth forth Death*, Jam. i. 15. And this may suffice for Explication of the *first* Part of the wise Man's Assertion in the Text, in justification of God from all possibility of being charged with the Sins of Men; that *God has made Man upright*.

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II. Here is in the 2d Place a Confession, that the Sin and Misery of Men, is wholly owing to *themselves*: But *THEY* have sought out many *Inventions*. And concerning this, there needs not much to be added. For when it has once been made appear, that God made Man *upright*; that is, that notwithstanding all the Infirmities of their Nature, he has

Serm. yet endued them with *proper Faculties* for
 XIV. their *present* State, to enable them to perform the Duty that is expected of them, according to the Proportions of a *Man*, in this very imperfect State; it follows in Course, that the *Corruptions* wherewith they deprave themselves, are not the Fault of that *Nature* which God has given them, but the perverse *Inventions* of their own Wills. And indeed, whoever looks into the World, cannot but observe, that much the greater Part of the Vices of Men, arise plainly from bad Education and ill Example, from the Allurements of the World and the Temptations of ill Company, from the Violence of ungoverned Passions and the Perverseness of unreasonable Desires: None of which things do belong properly to the *Nature* of a reasonable Creature, but are unreasonable and violent and therefore *unnatural* Corruptions of the Faculties wherewith God has indued us.

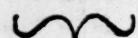
To enter into the *Particulars* of *All* vitious Habits, would be impossible, as well as disagreeable. But, to mention briefly the three *great* Heads or Instances of Corruption.

1st, With respect to our Duty towards God. Is it not evidently *agreeable to the nature*

nature of rational Creatures, to adore and worship, to love and to obey, the supreme Author and Preserver of their Being? And is it not an unnatural *Invention*, sought out by the most brutish Degeneracy; to forsake the Worship of Him that made the Heavens and the Earth and the Seas and all that in them is, to worship Wood and Stones graven by Art and Man's Device; and to *change the Glory of the incorruptible God, into Images made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things?* Or even in the Service and Worship of the *True* God, to forsake that *Method* of Worship which he himself has appointed; and set up any *Inventions of their own*, in the Place of what God has expressly commanded.

2dly, With regard to our Duty towards Men: Does not *Nature* plainly lead us to Righteousness and Truth, to Justice and Equity, to universal Charity and Good-Will towards each other? And is it not apparently the base *Invention* of a Heart which has laid aside all Humanity, that is, all true humane *Nature*; to enrich it self by Fraud and Unrighteousness, by oppressing the Innocent and the Poor; or to exalt it self by Violence and Cruelty,

Serm. and insulting over the Miseries of its fel-
 XIV: low-Creatures?



Lastly, With regard to our Duty towards *Ourselves*: Are not the Appetites of *Nature*, reasonable and modest, regular and sober, peaceable and contented within their proper Limits? And is it not plainly the *Invention* of an evil Heart, and of a wilfully degenerate and corrupted Spirit; to heighten unnatural Appetites by Art, to blow up disorderly Passions by obstinate Self-Will, and to indulge unreasonable Desires by habitual Opposition to right Reason and Religion?

In all these Cases therefore 'tis manifestly true, that *God has made Man upright, but they themselves have sought out many Inventions*. *Inventions*, to corrupt by indirect Practices the Simplicity of Nature: And, when they have so done, *Inventions* to deceive themselves, by giving the Name of *Nature* to the *unnatural* Effects of evil Customs and Habits; and *Inventions* to lay themselves asleep in their Error and Deceit, by finding out numberless Ways of reconciling a *wicked Life* with the Hopes and with the Pretences of *Religion*.

The

The Application of what has been said,
may be very Brief. And,

1st, From what has been said, we may observe, that the Difficulty of obeying the Commandments of God, does not so much arise, generally speaking, from the Nature of our *Duty*, or from the Nature of *Man*; as from the Temptations of *the World*, and from the *Custom* of Sinning. To Idolatry, Prophaneness and Irreligion, there is *no Temptation* in *Nature*; but from the Wickedness of Men, *wilfully* deceiving one another, and being deceived. To Iniquity, Cruelty and Injustice, there is nothing in *human Nature* that prompts us; but the Vices are *inhuman* as much as unchristian, and the effects only of unreasonable indulged evil Habits. To Intemperance and Debauchery, there *are* indeed in many Persons strong Inclinations, that may seem *more Natural*, and to be more immediate Effects of Man's *original* Corruption; being *a Law in the Members, warring against the Law of the Mind, and bringing Men into Captivity to the Law of Sin* and Death. But even *these* Inclinations, are *Temptations* only, and not *Sins*; unless they be consented to and indulged, in *unreasonable* and *unlawful* Instances;

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which God has given us the Use of Reason, and the Obligations of Religion, on purpose to restrain. If therefore it be *natural* to Man to be a *reasonable* Creature, 'tis *natural* to him also to be *Religious*; Religion being nothing else but the highest Reason, and the keeping our Passions subject and obedient to its Laws. Wherefore when St. Paul affirms, *Eph. ii. 3.* that *we all were by NATURE children of wrath*; 'tis a very great Abuse of Scripture, to understand him as if he had said, that *we were CREATED children of wrath*. For the *Nature* the Apostle there speaks of, is not *that Nature* wherein God created us, but *that second Nature* of evil Habits, which wicked Men bring upon themselves by *Custom* in Sinning; *that Nature*, which we usually mean even in common Speech, when we say 'tis the *Nature* of a profane or vitious Man, to act profanely or vitiously. For so are the Apostle's *express* Words: *We were by Nature*, saith he, *the Children of Wrath, even as Others*; because *among them WE also had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind*: Speaking of Christians, converted from Heathen Wickedness and Idolatry.

And

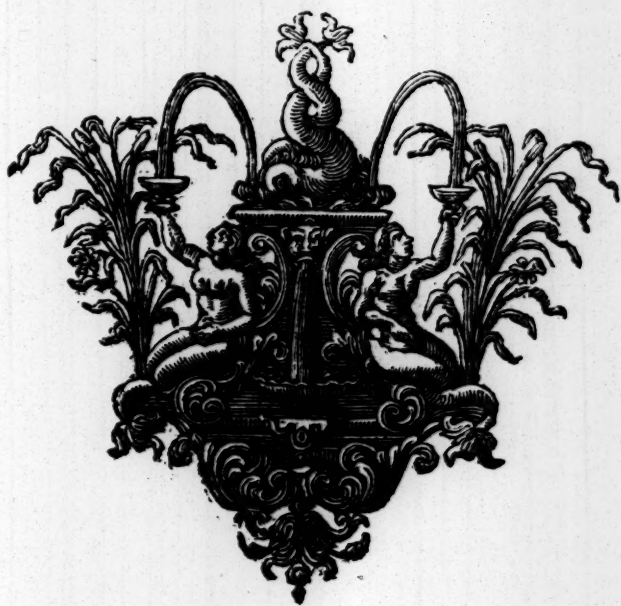
And *this* shews, in what manner also are to be understood such Texts as these which follow. Behold, I was SHAPEN in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother CONCEIVE me, Ps. li. 5. The Wicked are estranged from the WOMB, they go astray as soon as they are BORN, speaking lies, Ps. lviii. 3. I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a Transgressor from the WOMB, Is. xlvi. 8. They were a naughty Generation, and their Malice was BRED in them, and their Cogitation would NEVER be changed, Wisd. xii. 10. The Meaning of all these Texts is, not that Men were really Wicked by necessity of Nature; but 'tis a Complaint of them, that they were *so* wicked and corrupt, as if, speaking by way of Similitude, it had been bred even in their very Nature. But that it is not so meant *literally*, appears from hence, that, on the contrary, the same manner of speaking is used concerning good Men also. Job xxxi. 18, describing his own charitableness to the Poor, he saith; from my YOUTH, he (the Poor) was brought up with me; and I have guided her (the Widow) from my Mother's WOMB. And Ecclus. i. 14. describing very righteous Men, he saith; To fear the Lord, is the Beginning of Wisdom;

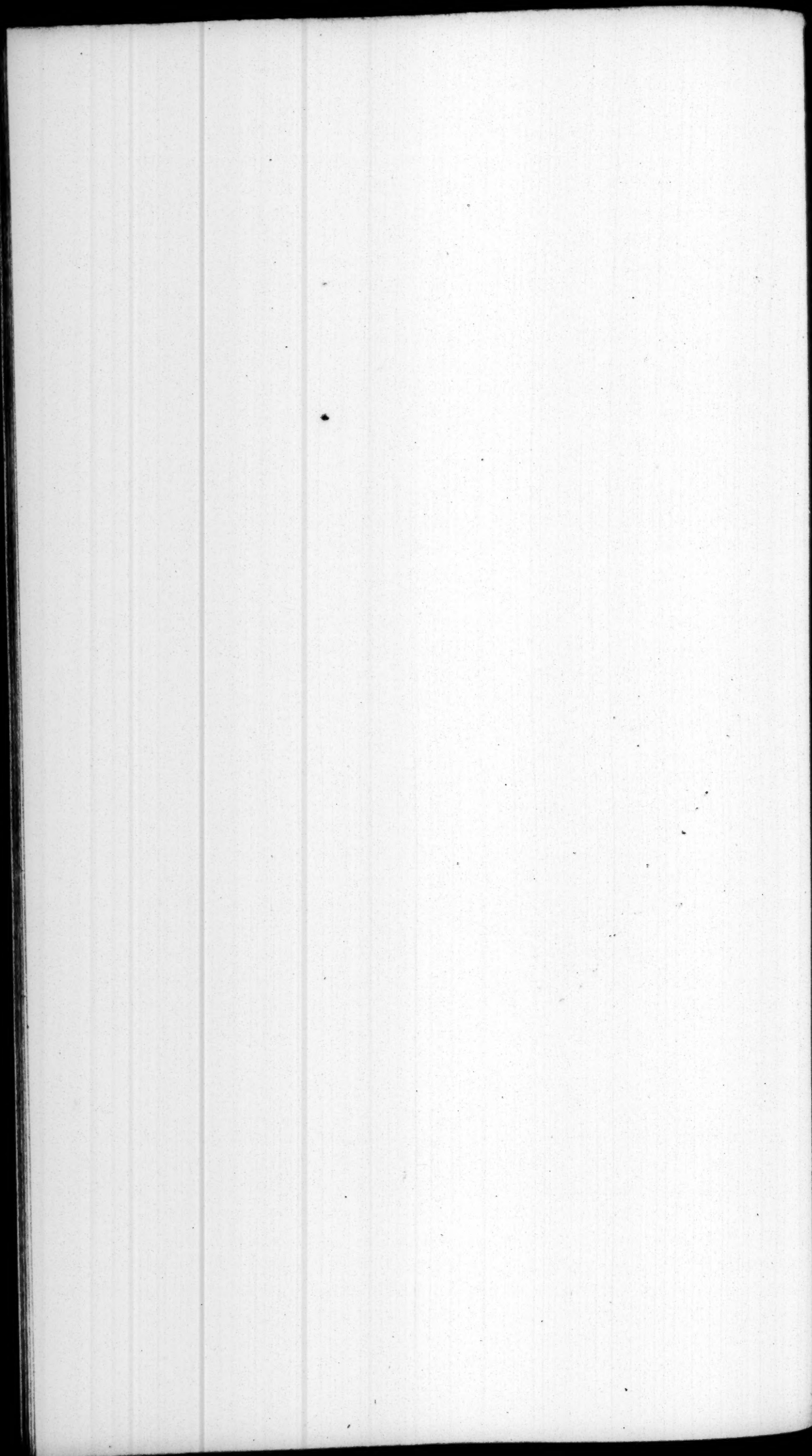
Serm. *Wisdom; and it was created with the*
 XIV. *Faithful in the WOMB.* The Meaning
 is; such Persons are as just and righteous,
 as if Virtue (comparatively speaking) had
 not been a Matter of *Choice*, but as if it
 had really been a Part even of their *Nature*
itself.

2dly, From what has been said, we may
 see the Reason of the *Manner* of our
 Saviour's Admonition to his Disciples;
 when, taking up a *young Child* in his
 Arms, and recommending its *natural* Simp-
 licity, Humility and Innocence; he told
 them, that *except they were converted*
and became as little Children, they should
not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;
 for that *of such was the Kingdom of*
God. And St. Paul makes use of the
 same Similitude, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *In Un-*
derstanding, saith he, be Men, but in
Malice be ye Children; that is, be ye
like to those who have not yet sought
out any evil Inventions.

3dly, We may from hence observe,
 how *great* the *Sin* of those is, who by
 ill Advice, or bad Example, *corrupt* the
 Minds of *Children*, or of *Men.* This
 is, in the highest Degree, being like un-
 to *Satan*, the great Tempter and De-
 stroyer of Mankind. And if *they* shall
 severely

severely be punished, who *comply* with those Temptations which rob them of their *own* Innocency, and destroy that *Uprightness* wherein God had created them; of how much sorer Punishment shall *Those* be thought worthy, who industriously labour in teaching Others also to seek out evil *Inventions*. Sermon. XIV.





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SERMON
 Preach'd in the
 PARISH-CHURCH
 OF
St James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 29, 1723.

ROM. IX. 23, 24.

And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory: Even Us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

THERE is no Part of the whole Sermon.
 New Testament, of greater difficulty to be understood; or which XV.
 has been more misapplied by the Ignorant, more

Serm.

XV.

more wrested by the Learned, and more
 falsely interpreted by the melancholy pi-
 ous Person; than this *9th Chapter* of *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. In which
 Chapter, whilst some have greatly per-
 plexed themselves by picking out some of
 the middle Verses of it; concerning God's
 electing the *Children which were yet un-*
born, and had *neither done good nor evil*;
 concerning his *loving Jacob*, and *hating*
Esau; concerning his *hardning Pharaoh*;
 and *shewing Mercy on whom he will have*
Mercy, and *having Compassion on whom*
he will have Compassion; and concerning
 his having the same Power over Mankind,
 as the *Potter* has over the *Clay*, to make
 one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dis-
 honour: Whilst some, I say, have great-
 ly perplexed themselves by picking out
 some of these Particulars singly; 'tis yet
 nevertheless very evident, both from the
 Apostle's *Introduction* of his Discourse at
 the *Beginning* of the Chapter, and from
 his *Conclusion* and summing up of his
 Argument at *the End*; that the Design of
 the *Whole*, is not at all to speak concern-
 ing any Decree of God, with Respect to
 the *final* and *eternal* State of *particular*
Persons; but only to declare both the
 sovereign Power and the Justice of God,
 in distributing to *different Nations* in di-
 vers Ages *what different Advantages* he
 pleases;

pleases; and revealing his Will to them at *what Times* and in *what Manner* he thinks fit. As, in that great Instance of his rejecting the *Jews*, and calling in the *Gentiles*. Which, at the *Beginning* of the Chapter, the Apostle expressly declares to be the Aim and Intention of his Discourse: And at the *End* he sums it up, as the Conclusion designed: And all the *intermediate* Parts of it, and the Examples therein alledged, are plainly nothing but *Similitudes* and *Illustrations* of this Argument.

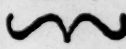
The Words of the Text itself, are as clear a Declaration of this whole Matter, as can be desired. *That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* Here the Apostle clearly and expressly declares, that by the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared afore of God unto Glory*, (of whom he had been treating in the fore-going Part of the Chapter,) he does not mean *particular Persons* chosen unconditionally to *eternal Salvation*; but the *whole Body* of Christians, even *Us whom he has called*, (and who have obeyed that Call by believing in Christ,) not from among *the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*:

Serm. *Gentiles : Called, to receive that Grace*
 XV. and Mercy, and to embrace those Advan-
 ~~~~~tages of the *Gospel*; by rejecting of which,  
 the *Jews* became Vessels of Wrath fitted  
 to destruction. And *We*, in like manner,  
 notwithstanding our being at present the  
 Vessels of Mercy, yet, if *we live unwor-*  
*thy* of the same Advantages, the Apostle  
 bids us beware, lest, since God spared  
 not the *Jews*, the natural Branches; much  
 more he also spare not *Us*, who were but  
 ingrafted after *their* Fall.

But, to enter into a more full and par-  
 ticular Explication of the Apostle's *whole*  
 Discourse. In the *foregoing Part* of this  
 Epistle, he had shown at large, *that* the  
*Gentiles*, by corrupting themselves con-  
 trary to the Law of *Nature*, (*ch. i;*) and  
 the *Jews* by disobeying the Law given  
 them from *Heaven*, (*ch. ii;*) were *Both*  
*of them* become equally liable to the  
 Wrath of God: For that, God being no  
 Respector of Persons, *as many as have*  
*sinned without the Law, shall perish with-*  
*out the Law; and as many as have sin-*  
*ned in the Law, shall be judged by the*  
*Law*, *ch. ii. ver. 12.*

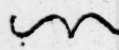
*That* therefore the Insufficiency of *Both*  
 these Laws, either to preserve Men from  
 Sin, or to furnish them with sufficient  
 Means



Means of Reconciliation after Sin; I Sermon.  
 say, the insufficiency of *Both* these Laws XV.  
 evidently appearing; consequently both   
*Jews* and *Gentiles* were obliged to be-  
 lieve in *Christ*; embracing and obeying  
 the *grace* or *gracious Terms* of the *Go-*  
*spel*, as the only Means of Justification  
 for the future, (*ch. iii.*) *For since all have*  
*sinned, and come short of the Glory of*  
*God, they can only be justified freely by*  
*his Grace, through the Redemption that is*  
*in Jesus Christ, v. 24.* That is; *All* being  
 Sinners, they can none of them claim Sal-  
 vation by the Merit of their Obedience,  
 but merely through the gracious Pardon  
 of Sin freely granted to Penitents thro'  
 Faith in *Christ*.

*That* this Justification by *Faith* with-  
 out *Works*, (that is, by the Obedience of  
 the *Gospel alone*, without the Ceremonies  
 of the *Law*,) *was* abundantly *sufficient*;  
 because it was *the same*, by which *Abra-*  
*ham* himself, the Father of the faithful,  
 had been justified, (*ch. iv*;) *For the Pro-*  
*mise was not to Abraham or to his Seed*  
*through the Law* (the *Mosaic Law*,)  
*but through the Righteousness of Faith*,  
*ver. 13.*

*That* this Justification by the Faith and  
 Obedience of the *Gospel*, affords much  
 Y greater

Serm.  
XV.  greater Assurance of present Peace and Reconciliation with God, and of eternal Life and Glory hereafter, than the *Law* could do, (*ch. v.*) *For if* (saith he) *when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him, ver. 9.*  
*That this free Justification by Grace through the Faith of the Gospel, without the Ceremonies of the Mosaick Institution, obliges Men to a stricter Obedience, to greater Purity and Holiness of Life, than the Law itself had done, (ch. vi;) Christians being now made free from Sin, and become the Servants of Righteousness; being dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ver. 11 and 18..*

*That the Law of Moses, was by no Means able to deliver Men from the Bondage and Slavery of Sin; from forbearing to do the good they would, and from doing the evil they would not; from the Law in their Body, warring against the Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death, (ch. vii.) But that the Gospel, having delivered Men from the Body of this Death, from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of*



of God; enabled them to prevail, not only over the Temptations of Sin within themselves, but also over all the Persecutions and all the Powers of the World, (ch. viii.) *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death. And now, Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all these Things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us,* ver. 2 and 35. Serm. XV.

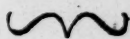
The Apostle, I say, having largely proved these several Particulars in the first *Eight* Chapters of this Epistle; proceeds in this *Ninth* Chapter to answer a great *Prejudice* and strong *Objection*, which he foresaw would be raised by the *unbelieving Jews*, against what he had hitherto been pleading for. For, if his Doctrine deliver'd in this Epistle was true, the Consequence was plain, that whosoever of the *Jews* rejected the Gospel; it would follow, notwithstanding their being *descended* from the *Patriarchs*, to whom all the *Promises* were made; notwithstanding their being the *peculiar People* of God; notwithstanding that *to them* were committed the *Prophecies* and *Oracles*

Serm. *cles of God; notwithstanding that to them*  
 XV. *pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and*  
 ~~~~~ *the Covenants, and the giving of the*  
Law, and the Service of God, and the
Promises; it would follow, that they were
still nevertheless out of the Way of Sal-
vation, in the most zealous Observance
of the ceremonial Righteousness of the
Law; unless they believed in Christ, and
obeyed the Gospel, which is the Righteous-
ness of Faith. This the Jews thought
to be an impossible Doctrine, and con-
trary to the Promises of God made to
their Fathers the Patriarchs; and that
therefore it was only an effect of the Apo-
stle's Zeal and Prejudice against them,
since his forsaking Them, and being con-
verted to Christianity. To this Obje-
ction therefore he replies at large, in this
ninth Chapter; by showing that there
was no Injustice in God, no breach of
Promise, no change of his Will, in re-
jecting the unbelieving Jews, and receiving
in the Gentiles; since even originally the
Promise was not made to All the Chil-
dren of Abraham, but to Isaac only;
and not to Both the Sons of Isaac, but
to Jacob only: And, of the Posterity of
Jacob, All were not Israel, which were
of Israel; but, in Elijah's Days, seven
thousand only were the true Israel; and, in
the time of Isaiah, though the number of
the

the Children of Israel was as the Sand of the Sea, yet a remnant only was to be saved; And, during the whole Period of the Law, God had mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he would have Compassion; That is, not on the whole people promiscuously, but on whom he himself pleased, who was the Alone competent Judge, and who Alone could infallibly distinguish such as were truly steadfast in their Faith or Fidelity towards him: And whom he would, he hardened; that is, cut off obstinate and incorrigible Offenders, he chose whom he pleased, to make remarkable examples of his Wrath and Vengeance. Since this, saith the Apostle, was the Case Originally, and the method of God's proceeding all along: much more at the coming of the Messiah into the World, who was the End of the Law, might God justly reject and cast off the Unbelievers; and reckon Those only the true children of Abraham, who imitated the Faith and Obedience of that great Father of the Faithful: Making known the riches of his glory, as the Text expresses it, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory; Even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

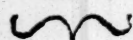
Serm.

XV.



Serm.

XV.



This being premised *in general*, and the principal force of the Apostle's Argument explained; the several *Particulars* of his discourse in this chapter, which have often been so widely mistaken and so strangely misapplied, may without much difficulty be understood. In the *first five verses* he begins with an *Apology* for himself, that, in this whole doctrine concerning the rejection of the *Jews*, he was not at all influenced by any *Prejudice* or *Hatred* he had contracted against his country-men since his conversion to Christianity. So far from *that*, that on the contrary he calls God to witness in the most solemn manner, that his grief and trouble of Mind for their Impenitency and Incredulity, and for their consequent rejection, and the judgments God would send upon them; was much greater and more uneasy to him, than all the other afflictions and calamities he met with in the World. *I say the Truth in Christ* (says he,) *I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my Heart; For I could wish that MY SELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh.* The expression is highly figurative and affectionate. And melan-

melancholy pious persons have sometimes been disturbed at it; as if *St. Paul's* Wish was an inimitable flight of Affection: Whose example herein, if a Christian can *in no case* follow, he may be apt to accuse himself of want of Charity; and yet to follow it in *any case*, seems terrible even to the strongest affection, and shocking even to the most fervent Zeal. For tho' for a good man, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses himself, one would even dare to *die*; yet for a man, upon any possible account whatsoever, to be content to become subject to the *Curse of God*, and to his *final displeasure*; this seems beyond the utmost bounds even of Christian Charity itself, either to desire, or to be ever capable of being prevailed with to submit to. 'Tis certain therefore, that the Meaning of the Apostle has been misunderstood; and that his intention in this passage, was not to wish himself subject to the *eternal wrath of God*, (which is absurd and impossible;) But, the wishing himself *accursed from Christ* for the sake of his own Nation and People, is to wish, that, if it were possible, he, by bearing *himself* those temporal judgments, which he saw were coming upon *Them* on account of their being *accursed from Christ* through their obstinacy and incredulity, might restore them again to the

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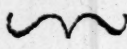
I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the Flesh. So far (says he,) am I from bearing any hatred or ill-will to my own Nation the Jews, that on the contrary I could willingly suffer all the Calamities in the World in their stead, if thereby I could prevent their rejection, and their being accursed from Christ. And this high expression of his zeal and concern for his own Nation in the Beginning of his Discourse, is an undeniable Demonstration, that the whole Argument itself, which follows in this chapter, does not at all relate to any imaginary Predestination of Particular persons to eternal Happiness or Misery; but that it wholly belongs to the rejection of the NATION of the Jews, for their Infidelity; and the calling in of the Gentiles, by the Gospel. For, in This Sense, his Apology for himself is very pertinent and apposite, and necessary to be premised in the Introduction of a Discourse, which he foresaw must needs be so extremely ungrateful to the whole Jewish Nation. But according to the Other Interpretation of the Apostle's Argument, there can no Sense at all be made of this Apology. For since predestinate or reprobate persons, if of such he
were

were speaking, were selected *irrespective-* Sermon.
ly both from among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; XV.
 and, *who* the *particular persons* so selected were, could not at all be known in this life; it could not serve any imaginable purpose in *such* an Argument, to premise an *Apology* concerning his great heaviness and continual sorrow of Heart for the rejection of his *own Nation* and Countrymen, the *whole people* of the *Jews*.

This *latter* therefore, being plainly his true Scope and Design; he proceeds at the 6th verse to show, that there was no injustice, no breach of promise in God, in rejecting the unbelieving *Jews*, and receiving the *Gentiles* in their room; forasmuch as the very *original* Promise to their Father *Abraham*, by which they were first intitled to become God's peculiar people, was not made promiscuously to *all* his Posterity, but to the children of the promise, the seed of *Isaac* only. Which was from the Beginning a Type and plain Prefiguration, that God did not principally intend his promise, to take place in *Abraham's* Descendants according to the *Flesh*; but in those who by a *Faith* or *Fidelity* like his, were in a truer and higher Sense the children and Followers, of that great Father of the Faithful.

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 Favour of God, and reinstate them in the Privileges of his peculiar people. *I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the Flesh.* So far (says he,) am I from bearing any *hatred* or *ill-will* to my own Nation the *Jews*, that on the contrary I could willingly suffer all the Calamities in the World in their stead, if thereby I could prevent their rejection, and their being *accursed from Christ*. And this high expression of his zeal and concern for his own Nation in the *Beginning* of his Discourse, is an undeniable *Demonstration*, that the *whole Argument itself*, which follows in this chapter, does not at all relate to any imaginary Predestination of *Particular* persons to *eternal Happiness* or *Misery*; but that it wholly belongs to the rejection of the *NATION of the Jews*, for their Infidelity; and the calling in of the *Gentiles*, by the Gospel. For, in *This* Sense, his Apology for himself is very *pertinent* and apposite, and *necessary* to be premised in the Introduction of a Discourse, which he foresaw must needs be so extremely ungrateful to the *whole Jewish Nation*. But according to the *Other* Interpretation of the Apostle's Argument, there can *no Sense* at all be made of this *Apology*. For since predestinate or reprobate persons, if of such he

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 by a *Faith* or *Fidelity* like his, were in
 a truer and higher Sense the children and
 Followers, of that great Father of the
 Faithful.

Serm. Faithful. The Promise of God therefore
 XV. is not at all made void by this new Dispensation: Nor can I in any wise be charged, says he, *as though I supposed the Word of God had taken none effect; For they are not All Israel, which are Of Israel; Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; But in Isaac shall thy seed be called; That is, They which are the children of the Flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise, are counted for the Seed, ver. 8.* So that, even according to the Original Intent of the promise made to Abraham, Christians of the Gentiles who imitated the Faith and moral Obedience of that Patriarch, were more truly his children, than his unbelieving *Posterity according to the Flesh.*

The same Argument the Apostle further illustrates in the 10th verse, by a still more eminent Example. For, if, saith he, not only among the children of Abraham, but even among the Posterity of Isaac himself, (that Child of the Promise;) God was pleased to continue to make such a distinction, as to confine the Promise to Jacob in exclusion of Esau, even before Either of them was born into the World: Much more may God Now, without injustice, confine his promise

promise to *such* only, who, after the Example of *Jacob*, believe in God, and obey his Will in what manner soever it be made known to them; Exclusive of those, who continue in their Unbelief, and obstinately reject that only means of Salvation which God hath proposed to them: Exclusive (I say) of these, notwithstanding that they be by descent the Posterity of *Jacob*, and in Other Respects equal to them that Believe. And this is the full meaning of the following Words, v. 11. *The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto Rebekah, The elder shall serve the younger; As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

That the Purpose of God, according to election, might stand. The only difficulty in this passage is, *What Purpose* of God the Apostle is here speaking of. Many have strongly imagined, that it is his Purpose of choosing some particular persons unconditionally to eternal Life, and others to eternal Destruction. But the Apostle gives not the least Hint of any such thing. On the contrary, he explains himself in express Words, that he means God's Purpose of appointing the elder of
Isaac's

Serm. *Isaac's Sons to serve the younger; And*
 XV. *This, not so much in their Persons, as*
 ~~~~~ *in their national Posterity: And therefore*  
*no Wonder, that God made This Ap-*  
*pointment before they were yet born. And*  
*the Use or Application the Apostle makes*  
*of this Instance, is, to prevent an Ob-*  
*jection of the unbelieving Jews; Who*  
*since they could not deny but, notwith-*  
*standing all the Promises made to Abra-*  
*ham and Isaac, yet God might in This*  
*Sense, without any injustice, hate and re-*  
*ject Esau; consequently they could not*  
*reasonably charge God with any unrighte-*  
*ousness, in rejecting in like manner the*  
*unbelieving Jews also themselves. What*  
*shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness*  
*with God? God forbid. ver. 14.*

And to the *same* Purpose he urges, in the following verses, the Instances of what God *declared* to *Moses*, and what he *did* to *Pharaoh*. If *of old* God *declared* to *Moses*, that he would have mercy on whom he *would* have mercy, and would have compassion on whom he *would* have compassion; *that is*, would have compassion on men in *what manner* and upon *what conditions* he *himself* judged fit, who is certainly the *most proper* and the *Only unerring Judge*: For the *same* reason Now also, says the Apostle, neither



neither is it of him that willeth nor of Serm.  
 him that runneth, to choose for himself XV.  
 in what Method God shall bring men to ~~~~~  
 Salvation; (as the unbelieving Jews would  
 do, by adhering obstinately to the ceremonial  
 righteousness of the Mosaick Law :)  
 But 'tis of God only, that sheweth Mercy;  
 'tis His part only, to appoint in what  
 manner, to whom, and on what conditions,  
 he will shew it. Even in Humane Judicatures,  
 should an unskilful Spectator take upon him  
 to find fault with the Sentence of an Able and Upright Judge, might  
 not the Judge well express himself in this  
 manner: *I will acquit, whom I see fit to acquit; and I will condemn, whom I see fit to condemn?* Meaning, not that he  
 would do it arbitrarily; but that, as having Alone the most perfect Knowledge of  
 the Law and of the Fact, his Sentence ought not to be questioned by unskilful Spectators.

Again: If of old God always reserved to himself a Liberty of choosing likewise out of incorrigible offenders, whom he thought fit, to make publick and eminent examples of his wrath and vengeance; as in the instance of Pharaoh, whom God hardned, (just in the same sense as He is said to have tempted David, when by his permission Satan tempted him, 2  
 Sam.

Serm. *Sam. xxiv, 1; and 1 Chron. xxi, 1. God \**  
 XV. *hardned Pharaoh, I say,) not by making*  
 or *decreeing* him to be wicked, (God forbid;) but, *being* wicked and incorrigibly obstinate, God *rais'd him up* or *supported him in his Power*, and deferred destroying him, and by many tryals made both his *obstinacy* and his *punishment* remarkable and conspicuous to the World, *that he might shew his Power in him, and that his Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* If thus in all Former times, says the Apostle, God always reserved to himself this Power of choosing from among incorrigible offenders, whom he pleased to make publick examples of his wrath; as in this instance of *Pharaoh*: for the same reason *Now* also, says he, neither is there any injustice in God, in choosing to make the impenitent and unbelieving *Jews*, (whom all his Judgments hitherto, and all his merciful and gracious invitations to embrace the Gospel,

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\* Thus *Deut. xxix. 4.* When *Moses* intended to *expostulate* with the Israelites, and to *reprove* them in the *severest* manner, for their *Wilful obstinacy and ingratitude*; he thus expresses it: *Ye have seen all that the Lord did —: Yet the Lord hath not Given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto This day.* The Sense of these words of *Moses*, is exactly what at This day is *vulgarly* expressed by the term, *Graceless*.



have only *hardned*, instead of bringing them to Repentance;) there is no injustice in God in making *Them* Examples of his Severity and Wrath, notwithstanding their being the Posterity of *Abraham* according to the Flesh; at the same time that he resolves to have mercy upon as many of the *Gentiles*, as shall obey the Call by which he invites them to receive the Gospel.

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Having thus cleared his main Argument, the Apostle proceeds in the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, to propose an *Objection*, which he foresaw the unbelieving *Jews* would make against the Doctrine he had been hitherto establishing. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his Will?* If God resolves to cast us off and destroy us, as he did *Pharaoh*; why doth he yet blame us, for being so rejected; for how can his Will be resisted? To this, He makes a two-fold Answer. *First*, by way of general Caution, ver. 20, 21; And *secondly*, by a particular and direct Reply, ver. 22, and in the Words of the Text. *First*, by way of general Caution, he reproves the rashness of replying presumptuously against God, ver. 20; *Nay but, O man, Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it,*

Serm. *it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath*  
 XV. *not the Potter power over the Clay, of*  
 ~~~~~ *the same lump to make one Vessel to ho-*  
nour, and another to dishonour? That is;
 not that God could originally create one
 man unconditionally to eternal Life, and
 another on purpose for eternal Misery;
 for this, if it were *possible* (as 'tis infinite-
ly impossible) to be true, would yet be
 nothing at all to the Apostle's Argument
 concerning the Whole Nation of *the*
Jews: But the plain meaning is (as ap-
 pears from the express application of these
 passages in the 45th of *Isaiah* and the 18th
 of *Jeremiah*, from whence they are ci-
 ted;) that God has as much *Power* and
 as much *Right*, to punish or reject *one*
 Nation or people, and receive or exalt
another, upon what terms *he himself*
judges to be most fit and reasonable; as
 the Potter has, to form and mould his
 clay, first into one Shape, and then into
 another. But *Secondly*, the Apostle an-
 swers further to the fore-mentioned Ob-
 jection, by a particular and direct Reply;
 that the rejected Jews had no reason at
 all to murmur against the Power and Will
 of God; for that though it was indeed *his*
 absolute Will and uncontroulable Power,
 to punish them *when and in what man-*
ner he thought fit; yet it was *Their own*
 obstinacy and impenitency only, that made
 them

them liable to be so rejected and punished at all. Ver. 22, *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his Power known, endured WITH MUCH LONG-SUFFERING the Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?* The words *with much long-suffering*, prove very clearly, that even the rejected *Vessels of Wrath* themselves were not destroyed, till God had first long waited even for *their Repentance and Amendment*; which evidently shows, it was not *before* determined to be impossible. And then he adds in the words of the Text: *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; Even Us whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* The *Vessels of Mercy* therefore, are not particular persons chosen irrespectively; but *Us* whom he has called, that is, the whole *Body of Christians* in opposition to the whole *Nation* of the rejected unbelieving *Jews*. Which is also further evident from the Application he makes in the following verse, of the words of the Prophet: *And he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved: And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them,*

Serm. *Ye are not my people, there shall they be*
 XV. *called the children of the Living God.*

~ And still more clearly, if possible, from the manner of his *Summing up* the whole Argument, ver. 30; *What shall we say then? that the Gentiles which followed not after Righteousness, have attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith; But Israel which followed after the law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, (that is, by embracing the Gospel,) but as it were by the Works of the Mosaick Law.* All which he goes on yet further to explain and illustrate, in the whole 10th and 11th Chapters following. Which are so plain, that they need no Interpretation.

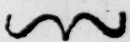
From what has been said, we may draw the two following practical Observations.

1st, Such pious Persons, as are apt to be disturbed with melancholy apprehensions concerning their own State; fearing, that after all their sincerest and most earnest endeavours to obey the Will of God by a life of Virtue and true Holiness, they may yet possibly not be of the number of those *Vessels of Mercy*, whom he
 has

has afore prepared unto Glory; Such Persons, I say, may have their Doubts removed, by considering, that all those passages of Scripture, from which Some have earnestly endeavour'd to establish the Doctrine of absolute and unconditionate decrees, do upon a careful consideration appear to have been greatly misinterpreted; and that by *the Vessels of Mercy*, whom God had afore prepared unto Glory, St. Paul plainly means, not particular Persons chosen irrespectively out of the bulk of Mankind; but the *whole Body of Christians*, the universal Church of Christ, in opposition to the *whole People or Nation of the Jews*. The *Election* (the *chosen people*) have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

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2dly, On the other hand, such as are apt to be Presumptuous, and think themselves secure in the bare Profession of Christianity; upon account of the *whole Body of Christians* being stiled in Scripture, *the elect*, *the election*, *Vessels of Mercy*, and the like: These ought to take Notice, that in like manner as St. Paul, out of the prophet *Isaiab*, observes that when the *whole Nation* of the Jews were the chosen and peculiar people of God, yet out of Them a *Remnant* only were to be finally saved; So Now also, though

Serm. the whole Body of Christians, upon account of God's gracious Offers of Mercy to them in Christ, are stiled in Scripture *the election of grace*; yet Those only who live *worthy* of so excellent a Profession, by the Practice of true Virtue, Righteousness and Holiness, shall finally be made partakers of the Benefit thereof. For, as Christ *chose*, (the word in the Original is, *elect*) twelve disciples, and yet one of them proved a Devil and the Son of Perdition; so, notwithstanding that *all* Christians are the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared of God afore unto Glory*; yet if any man *draws back*, he shall lose the Benefit of that Preparation; and God will no longer have any Pleasure in him; that is, he shall finally be rejected, and not be made partaker of the Salvation of the Gospel.

A
SERMON
 Preach'd in the
 PARISH-CHURCH
 OF
St James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Feb. 2, 1723.

LUKE XVI. 12.

*And if ye have not been Faithful in
 That which is Another man's, who
 shall give you That which is your
 own?*

THESE words are the Conclusion Serm.
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 of a Parable; in which our Lord
 shows us, that the Men of *This*
 world are generally more diligent, more
 skilful, and more true to their Own Interest,
 in the pursuit of their *worldly* Designs;
Z 3
than

Serm. than men who have the Knowledge of
 XVI. the *True Religion*, and of the Happiness
 of the *Life to come*, are in securing to
 themselves a Portion in That *eternal State*. And thence he exhorts his Disciples, to learn Wisdom in *this Particular*, even from *vitious and corrupt* men; to learn, even from *Their Behaviour*, to make the best Improvement of the Advantages they have in their Hands; and be as diligent in making Provision for the time to come, in Matters of *Eternal Concern*, as others are in *Temporal*. The case he puts by way of Similitude, is that of a *Steward*; who having embezzled his Lord's Goods, and finding he should thereupon be removed from his Place, deliberates with himself what Course he had best to take for his future Subsistence. To *dig*, or earn his Bread by the Labour of his Hands, was what he had never been brought up to; To *Beg*, he was ashamed. What he at last resolv'd upon, was to do at present some considerable Acts of Generosity to several of his Lord's Debtors; that afterwards, when he came to be discharged from his Place, he might find Some Support in the Returns of *Their Gratitude*: *Ver. 4, I am resolv'd what to do; that, when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses.* Accordingly, sending
 ing

ing for his Lord's Debtors, he immediately *remits* to each of them a considerable Proportion of their Debt. Whether we are to suppose he did this *fraudulently*, in further Wrong to his Lord; or whether he did it *with Justice*, out of his own present Substance; is not material to the Intent of the Parable. What our Saviour *observes* upon it, is *This only*; that his Lord *commended him*, ver. 8, *because he had done wisely*: He commended his *Worldly Wisdom*, in securing to himself Friends against the day of Adversity. And the *Application* our Lord makes of it, is *This*: That, what All men, both just and unjust, acknowledge to be the great Instance of Wisdom in *Temporal* Affairs; the making provision beforehand against a time of Necessity: is really *much more* so, with regard to things *Eternal*. But in fact, 'tis in this *latter case* much more rarely put in *Practice*: For *the children of This World*, says he, *are in their generation wiser than the children of Light*. This Observation contains an affectionate *Reproof* of the *Remissness* of Christians, in not being sufficiently solicitous about their *future* and *final* Interest: And there is included in it an earnest *Admonition to them*, to learn from the example even of an *unrighteous* World, to be true to their

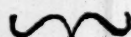
Serm. Principles; and to be as *Wise* in attending
 XVI. to *their own Advantages*, as *worldly men*
 are to *Theirs*. Learn, says he, even
 from the Similitude of the *Unjust Steward*, to lay up for yourselves a *Treasure*
 against the time to come, to secure to
 yourselves a *Refuge* against the day of
 Trial. Make to yourselves *Friends of*
the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that
 when ye fail, they may receive you into
 everlasting *Habitations*. He that is
Faithful in that which is least, is *faith-*
ful also in much; and he that is *unjust*
in the least, is *unjust also in much*. If
 therefore you have not been *faithful in the*
unrighteous mammon, who will commit
 to your Trust the *True Riches*? And
 if ye have not been *faithful in That*
which is Another man's, who shall give
 you that which is your own? There is
 some little Obscurity in the Words, ari-
 sing from the *manner of expression*; espe-
 cially in that *latter part* of them, which
 are the words of *my Text*. But if we
 carefully consider their *True Sense*; they
 will appear to contain the *clearest Rea-*
soning, and the *strongest and most noble*
Argument in the World.

In the *first* place 'tis to be observed,
 that the words, *unrighteous mammon*,
 with which our Lord here exhorts his
 Disciples

Disciples to make to themselves Friends, *Serm.*
do not signify *Riches UNJUSTLY XVI.*
gotten, Riches which men have no
RIGHT at all to possess; but which
they have no *Lasting*, no *certain*, no
Secure and Permanent Right to; no
Right of perpetuity of Enjoyment. For
they are expressly opposed, not as *unjust*
or *ill-gotten*, to *just* or *well-gotten* Riches;
but as *False* and *Deceitful*, they are here
opposed to the *True Riches*; and as *in-*
secure transitory Possessions, to *Everla-*
sting Habitations.

In the *Next* place 'tis to be observed,
that the words, *He that is Faithful in*
that which is LEAST, is Faithful also
in MUCH; are a comparison between
the *Present Life*, and the *Future*. *He*,
and *He only*, who, in the State of Tryal
Here, shows his *Fidelity* in a *Small Trust*;
shall *Hereafter* have intrusted to him an
unspeakably *Larger* and *more permanent*
Possession. Thus our Lord explains him-
self in the Parable of the Talents, *Matt.*
25, 21; *Well done, thou good and Faith-*
ful Servant; thou hast been Faithful
over a Few things, I will make thee
Ruler over Many things; Enter thou
into the Joy of thy Lord. Or, as he ex-
presses it in *Luke 19, 17*; *Well, thou good*
Servant; because thou hast been Faith-
ful

Serm. *ful in a very Little, have thou Autho-*
 XVI. *rity over Ten Cities.*



Lastly, 'tis to be observ'd (which indeed is the principal difficulty in the Text;) that the words, *Who shall give you That which is your Own?* do not signify, That which is *Already* your own, but that which *is to be*; that which, when once given you, *WILL* be your own for a *Perpetual and Unalienable Possession*. If ye have not been *Faithful in that which is Another man's*, in that which you knew was *only a Trust* committed to you, and committed to you *only for a very short time*; how then can you be fit to be intrusted with a *Possession for Perpetuity*? If in a matter wherein you knew you must be called to *account*, and knew not every day but *the very next* might be the *day of accounting*, you have still ventured presumptuously to be *Unfaithful*; how are ye fit to be intrusted with *Power* and a *KINGDOM*, with *Power in your Own Property*, with a *Possession secure and of unchangeable Duration*?

Thus the *Sense* of our Lord in this whole Discourse, is exceeding *clear*; and the Argument on which he builds his Admonition, *strong* and *affectionate*.
 Learn,

Learn, says he, *one part of true Wisdom*, even from *worldly*, even from *unrighteous men*. The *unjust Steward* in the *Parable*, foreseeing he should not long possess his Stewardship, had Wisdom enough to make *some sort of Provision* for himself, against the Day of Adversity. Ye also, says our Lord, are *Stewards*, entrusted with a small treasure, for a very uncertain, but certainly very short, Time. *This Treasure*, to which you have no *lasting Right*, no *continuing Title*; make to yourselves Friends with it, *Now*. Employ it in such a manner, in things innocent and virtuous, in ways just and righteous, in works useful and charitable; that *hereafter*, when this *transitory life* shall *fail*, ye may be found worthy to be *received into everlasting Habitations*. To obtain a Portion in those *everlasting Habitations*, there is no other possible way, but by being found faithful in this *Temporary Trial*. For *He that is Faithful in Little*, may reasonably be depended upon, that he will be *Faithful also in Much*; But *He that is Unjust in the Least thing*, can with no reason expect to be trusted with what is *Greater*. If therefore, says our Lord, ye be not faithful in a Trust of so short continuance, as the *present time* is; how are ye fit to have committed to you the *True and Eternal*

Serm.
XVI.

Serm. *ternal Riches? And if ye be not faithful in*
 XVI. *That which is Another's, and for which*

ye are *accountable* every moment; how is it fit ye should be trusted with a *permanent* Treasure, a Treasure to continue in your *own Power*, in your *own proper and unalienable Possession*?

Having thus at large explained the words, and illustrated the *Argument* used by our Lord in the Text; it remains that I deduce from thence some *Doctrinal* Observations, which may be of Use to us in *Practice*. And

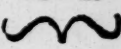
1st, 'Tis obvious to observe, that what our Lord here argues, both in the Parable and in the Application of it, with regard to the use of *Riches* in particular; is equally applicable, and intended to be applied, to *every other* Advantage or Ability whatsoever. *Authority, Honour, Power, Knowledge*; every Opportunity in Life, of having *Influence* upon Men; may, as well as *Riches*, be either made use of to the Glory of God, and the promoting of Virtue; or may be abused to Other, and Contrary Purposes. The *Ground* of our Lord's Exhortation in the Text, is the *Same* with regard to *All* these things; and may, with *equal Reason*, be applied to them *All*. They are *All of them*, in the present

present Life, of very short; all of them, of equally uncertain continuance. They are all of them committed to us, as to Stewards during pleasure; all of them, what we are accountable for, every moment. What have we then to do, according to Any measures of Wisdom and Prudence; but to employ all these things faithfully to Such Purposes here in this transitory life, as may hereafter be a Foundation for our being received into everlasting Habitations? For if, in the use of Any of these Abilities, we be not at present Faithful in That which is Another's; in That which Now for a short time only, is committed to us upon Trust, and upon Account, from Another: How can we reasonably expect to have them hereafter given to us for Our Own, for an unalienable and everlasting Possession?

2dly, A Second doctrinal Observation arising from our Saviour's Argument in the Text, is; that the *present life* is a Tryal of mens Fidelity, a Probation of their Fitness for a future and more lasting State. He that is faithful in that which is Least, is Faithful also in Much; and He that is unjust in the Least, is unjust also in Much. If therefore, (says he) ye be not Faithful in a Temporary Trust, Who shall think fit to give you an Eternal Inheritance? What Moses said to the Israelites

Serm. *Israelites* concerning their Passage thro'
 XVI. the Wilderness to the Promised Land,
 ~~~~~ *Deut. viii, 2*; is exactly parallel to the  
 present case. *Thou shalt remember all the  
 way which the Lord thy God led thee  
 these forty years in the Wilderness, to  
 humble thee, and to PROVE thee, to  
 KNOW what was in thine heart, whe-  
 ther thou would'st keep his Command-  
 ments, or no.* The meaning is; not, that  
 God wants *information*, or tries men with  
 regard to *Himself*, who knoweth all  
 things: But with regard to *Them*, he proves  
 and exercises their *Virtue*; the *Habits* of  
 which, *essentially* and in the *Nature* of  
 things, are *produced* and *improved* no  
 otherwise than by *Acts*. In the *Fabrick*  
 of the *Natural* and *Material* World, eve-  
 ry thing is, by the *Necessity of its Nature*,  
 exactly and invariably what the Creator  
 made it: Nor can any of *These things*  
 possibly, by *Any Power* of *Nature*, ei-  
 ther *improve* or *destroy* their own origi-  
 nally implanted Perfections. But in the  
*Moral* world, of intelligent and rational  
 Creatures; the Case is just the *Reverse*.  
 The very *Essence* of *Virtue* consists, in  
 being *freely chosen*. And had not God so  
 constituted *Moral Agents*, as to make  
*Their* Goodness or Badness depend upon  
 the *Habits* they should acquire by their  
*own free Acts*; he had in the very Act of  
 Creation destroyed his own Design, and  
 had



had not made them at all *Moral Agents*. Sermon.  
Consequently, (which is the *Noblest Part* XVI.  
of the Idea of God,) he had neither been   
*King* nor *Judge* nor *Governour* of the  
World, but merely as an *Artificer* of a  
*Great Machine*. A *Machine*; in the  
Fabrick of which, he *has* indeed display-  
ed, by an infinite variety of the most sur-  
prising Effects, *Wisdom unfathomable*,  
and *Power inexhaustible*. But 'tis all  
*merely* for the sake of the *Inhabitants*,  
whom he has placed therein, capable of  
contemplating this divine Workmanship.  
For otherwise, the whole Fabrick of the  
Earth and Heavens; beautiful, great, and  
glorious as it is; is yet *in itself*, (being  
lifeless, void of all Sense and Knowledge,  
and not so much as Conscious of its own  
Existence,) less valuable than the meanest  
single Animal in the Universe. And to-  
gether with an infinite variety of creatures  
indued *merely* with *life, sense, and mo-*  
*tion*; 'tis still comparatively as Nothing;  
'tis still really of less Value, than *One Ra-*  
*tional, Intelligent, Free, Moral Agent*,  
capable of *Knowing*, capable of *Contem-*  
*plating* and *Acknowledging*, capable of  
*Imitating*, in its *degree* and *measure*, the  
Perfections of its Great Creator. For  
the Sake of *These* therefore, the World  
was created. And *These* God cannot  
but govern in ways suitable to *Their* na-  
ture, as he governs the *material World*  
in

Serm. in a way suitable to *Its* nature. *These*  
 XVI. he cannot but dispose into different Sta-  
 ~~~~~ tions, proportionable to their *Moral* Ca-  
 pacities and Improvements; in like man-
 ner as, in the *Natural* World, he has ad-
 justed every thing in *Weight and Mea-*
sure. In the *One*, appears the Skill and
 Wisdom of an All-powerful *Artificer*;
 In the *Other alone*, appears the Glory
 and Majesty of a Supreme *King*, and the
 Righteousness of an All-seeing and un-
 erring *Judge*. This is the manifest Voice
 of *Nature and Reason*; and This is the
 express and constant Declaration of *Script-*
ture. All sorts of *Abilities, Powers,*
and Capacities whatsoever, wherewith
 God has *at present* indued men; *Riches,*
Honour, Authority, Wisdom, Knowledge,
 and the like; are by our Saviour, in his
 Parable of the *Talents*, represented as so
 many particular *Trusts*, committed to
 mens Charge in This World; as *Tryals* of
 their *Fidelity*, in way of *Probation* of
 their *Fitness* for a *Better and more Las-*
ting State. They who employ not these
 Abilities to *Virtuous* Purposes, in promo-
 ting *Truth* and *Righteousness* in the
 World; are the *wicked and slothful Ser-*
vant, to whom his Lord said, *Thou ought-*
est to have put my Money to the Exchan-
gers, and then at my coming I should have
received mine own with Usury: Take
therefore

therefore the Talent from him; -----and cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer darknes; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, Matt. xxv, 27. On the contrary: They who, according to their respective Abilities, employ the different Powers (whatsoever they be) wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting the Glory of God, and the Practice of Virtue in the World; These are the Servants, who, in trading with five talents, having gained five more; and with two talents, having gained Other two; their Lord said to each of them in his Proportion; Well done, thou good and faithful Servant; Thou hast been Faithful over a Few things, I will make thee Ruler over Many things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord. In the language of my Text: Thou hast been Faithful in That which is Another man's, in That small and short Trust which I committed to thy Charge; I will now therefore give thee a Possession, which shall be in Property thy Own, thy Own for an unalienable and everlasting Inheritance. In the 24th ch. of St. Matthew, v. 42. our Lord expresses the same thing still more strongly: Watch therefore, says he, and----be Ye also ready; for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and

A a

wise

Serm. *wise Servant, whom his Lord has made*

XVI. *Ruler over his Household, to give them*

Meat in due Season? Blessed is That Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing : Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over All his Goods. 'Tis in allusion to This Notion, of the present life being a Tryal of mens Fidelity, or of their Fitness for a better State ; that St. Paul, when the End of his days drew near, declares concerning himself, 2 Tim. iv, 7, *I have fought a good fight, --- I have kept the Faith*; (I have preserved my Fidelity, or shown my self Faithful in my Trust :) Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness. And in the former Part of his Life, describing his Care in the Government of himself and of his own Passions, 1 Cor. ix, 27, *I keep under my Body*, says he, and bring it into Subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to Others, I myself should be a Cast-away : in the Original it is, *I my self should be [ἀδόκιμος]* found Not proof; not proof against the Temptations of the present World; not meet for the USE, for the Employment, for the Station intended me in the Life to come. For, (as he in another place expresses this matter by a most apt similitude ;) in a great House, there are

are, says he, *not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth; and some to Honour, and some to Dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from These, (from ungodly Works and Doctrines mentioned in the former part of the chapter;) he shall be a Vessel unto Honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared unto every good Work.*

Serm.

XVI.

The *Principal* method, in which the unsearchable Wisdom of God has *most frequently* been pleased to *Try* the *Fidelity* of his *Best* and most eminent Servants, has been by *Afflictions* and *Persecutions* of various kinds: *Proving* them, whether, in case of *Competition*, they would *stedfastly* prefer the *Interest* of *Truth* and *Virtue*, in opposition to all the *Advantages*, and to all the *Sufferings* too, of this *present* Life. *Whosoever* (says our Lord) *does not bear his Cross, and come after me; cannot be my Disciple*, Luke xiv, 27. And hence it is, that in Scripture we so frequently find the *Trial* of mens *Fidelity*, compared to the purifying and *Trying* of *Metals* by *Fire*. *Many shall be purified and made white, and tried*, Dan. xii. 10. *And they that understand among the People, shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by* Dan. xi.

A a 2

the 33.

Serm. *the Sword and by Flame, by Captivity*
 XVI. *and by Spoil: — And Some of Them*
 ~~~~~ *of Understanding shall fall, to Try them,*  
*and to purge, and to make them white.*  
 Thus again, *Is. lxviii, 10, Behold, I have*  
*refined thee, but not with Silver; I have*  
*chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction.*  
 Zech. xiii. *I will refine them, as Silver is refined;*  
 9. *and will try them, as Gold is tryed.*  
 And *Job xxiii. 10; He knoweth the way*  
*that I take: When he has tried me, I*  
*shall come forth as Gold.* The Later  
 Writers of the Books of *Wisdom* and  
*Ecclesiasticus*, apply the same similitude  
 with great justness of Thought, and elo-  
 quence of Expression. *Gold is tried in*  
 Eccus. ii. *the Fire, and Acceptable men in the Fur-*  
 5. *nace of Adversity. The Souls of the*  
*Righteous are in the Hand of God, and*  
 Wisd. iii. *there shall no Torment touch them. Ha-*  
 5. *ving been a little chastised, they shall be*  
*greatly rewarded; for God PROVED*  
*them, and found them worthy for Him-*  
*self. As Gold in the Furnace has he*  
*Tried them, and received them as a Burnt-*  
*Offering. In the New Testament, the*  
*same figure of speaking, is continued in*  
*the same Sense. Our Saviour, in his*  
*Exhortation to the Christian Church in*  
*That Period of time, which is represen-*  
*ted by the Church of Smyrna: Behold,*  
*(says he,) the Devil (the Spirit of False*  
*Accusation)*



Accufation) *shall cast some of you into* Serm.  
*prison, that ye may be TRIED :-----* XVI.  
*Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will* ~  
*give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. ii, 10.*  
*And at another time: Because (says he)*  
*thou hast kept the word of my Patience,*  
*I also will keep Thee from (or carry thee* ch. iii. 10.  
*safely through) the Hour of Temptation,*  
*which shall come upon all the World, to*  
*TRY them that dwell upon the Earth.----*  
*Him that overcometh, (that is, who shall*  
*be found Faithful in that Hour of Tryal,*  
*notwithstanding all the Allurements and*  
*all the Terrors of an unrighteous World;*  
*Him) will I make a PILLAR in the*  
*Temple of my God: A PILLAR, or*  
*Eminent Part, of That Living Temple of*  
*God, of which the Twelve Apostles are*  
*(by a most beautiful and expressive meta-*  
*phor) represented as being the \* twelve* \*Rev. xxi.  
*Foundation-Stones, or \* Rocks on which* 14. & Mat.  
*it is built; and Jesus Christ himself the* xvi. 18.  
*chief corner-stone, by which the Whole*  
*Building is compact together. With a*  
*View to These and the like Promises it*  
*is, that St. James declares: Blessed is the* Jam. i. 12  
*man that endureth Temptation; for when*  
*he is TRYED, he shall receive the*  
*Crown of life. And St. Peter: That* 1Pet. i.  
*the TRYAL (saith he) of your Faith,*  
*(of your Fidelity or Faithfulness,) being*  
*much more precious than of Gold that*  

A a 3
perisheth,

Serm. *perisheth, though it be tried with Fire,*  
 XVI. *might be found unto praise and honour*  
 ~~~~~ *and glory, at the appearing of Jesus*  
Christ.

3dly, A *Third* doctrinal Observation, obviously arising from the fore-going, and of great Use in Practice; is This. If the *present life* is a *Tryal* of mens *Fidelity*, a *Probation* of their *Fitness* for a *Future and more Lasting State*; then every *erroneous Notion*, which is of *such* a nature, as leads men to rely upon *Any Equivalent* whatsoever, instead of employing *faithfully* those *Talents*, wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting his Kingdom of *Truth* and *Righteousness*; must needs be a *Fatal Deceit*. If men content themselves barely with a *zealous Profession* of the *true Religion*, and a diligent avoiding of all *false opinions* in *Speculation*: If they rely entirely upon a regular Observance of those merely *External Duties* of Religion, which were appointed of God as *Obligations* and *Assistances* to *True Virtue*: If they satisfy themselves with that *Sorrow for Sin*, and *Fear of Punishment* upon the Approach of Eternity, which is vulgarly called a *Death-bed-Repentance*: If they depend upon any *absolute Decree* of *God*, or upon any application of the *Merits* of *Christ*,

Christ, to save them, not *from*, but *in* Sermon.
 their *Sins* : If they expect to be saved by XVI.
 their *Faith*, meaning thereby mere *Credulity*, instead of *Fidelity* or *acting*
Faithfully upon the Principles they profess: In these and all other Cases whatsoever, which can possibly be reconciled with *vitious* and *immoral* Practice; our Saviour will say unto them, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*. For if ye have not been *Faithful* in a small and temporary *Trust*, how is it fit I should give you a *Kingdom* to be your *Own* for ever?

4thly, and *Lastly* : From what has been said, it appears, that the principal *Difference* of men, in *God's* estimation, consists not so much in the *Number* of the *Talents* committed to them, as in the *Degree* of their *Fidelity*, or the *Good Use* they make of them. For, *Many that are First shall be Last, and the Last First*. And to *Him* who with *two Talents* gained *two* more, as well as to *Him* who with *Ten Talents* gained *other Ten*, our Lord says; " Well done, thou
 " good and faithful Servant, Enter thou
 " into the Joy of thy Lord: For he that
 " is Faithful in *Little*, is Faithful also in
 " *Much* : Wherefore since thou hast been
 " Faithful in that which is *Another man's*,

Serm. " in That short and small Trust which I
XVI. " committed to thy charge; I will there-
" fore give thee a Treasure and Inheri-
" tance which shall be *thine Own*, thine
" *Own* for an unalienable and everlast-
" ing Possession."



A
 SERMON
 Preach'd in the
 PARISH-CHURCH
 OF

St James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Feb. 16, 1723.

LUKE XVII, 37.

*And they answered and said unto him:
 Where, Lord? And he said unto them,
 Wheresoever the Body is, thither will
 the Eagles be gathered together.*

THESE words are a Proverbial Sermon.
 Saying, used by our Lord upon XVII.
 two different Occasions. Once
 in *This place*, upon occasion of the Pha-
 risees demanding of him, *ver. 20, WHEN*
the

Serm. *the Kingdom of God should come.* And
 XVII. *again in the 24th of St. Matthew, upon*
 ~~~~~ *occasion of his Disciples asking him,*  
*WHEN shall these Things be? and*  
*What shall be the Sign of thy coming and*  
*of the End of the World?* In this *Latter*  
 place, our Lord, in answer to the *Quef-*  
 tion put to him by his Disciples, gives  
 them a large Prophetick Description of  
 the destruction of the City and Nation  
 of the Jews, by the Power of the *Ro-*  
*mans*; and a long Series of *Other Events*,  
 which were to be accomplished before  
 his coming to Judgment. And because  
 he is very particular and distinct in *That*  
*Part* of the Prophecy, which relates to  
 the destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Ro-*  
*mans*, whose Armies carried an *Eagle*  
 for their Ensign; therefore the Genera-  
 lity of Expositors have understood the  
 Meaning of the words of my Text to be,  
 that *wheresoever the Jews were, thither*  
*would the Roman Armies be gathered*  
*together to destroy them.* But *This Sense*  
 of the words seems *low*; and the *Allusion*  
 to be *far-fetched*; and the *Application* of  
 them, too much *confined*; and their  
*Connexion* in the whole Discourse, very  
 difficult *to be made out.* For our Lord,  
 in *the Place* where these words come in,  
 in *St. Matthew's Gospel*, as well as in *That*  
 of *St. Luke*, is not speaking of the *Ro-*  
*mans*.



mans destroying the Jews; (for, *That* Sermon. XVII. *Part of his Prophecy* he had finished, several verses before :) But he is speaking, in *One* of these places, concerning the unreasonableness of *looking for Christ's Coming* in *Any particular Part* of the World, in *the Desert*, or in the *Secret Chambers*, or in *Any One Place* rather than another. And in the *Other* place, he is speaking concerning the *righteous Judgment* of God, *distinguishing* persons from each other in the *Highest degree*, between whom in all *Worldly Appearance* there was *No Distinction*. The true Sense therefore of the words of the Text, must be gathered, not from any *remote Allusion* in the single word, *Eagles*; but from the *immediate Connexion* of the intire Sentence, in the Discourse wherein it is joined; and from the *natural Signification* of the whole *Proverbial Saying*, considered as *Proverbial*.

There are several Instances in Scripture, of *Other* Proverbial Sayings, inserted in like manner as This in the Text; very usual at the *Time*, and in the *Language*, wherein they were spoken; so as to be as easily and as perfectly understood, by the *Vulgar*, as the most *literal* Expressions whatsoever. Thus Ezek. xviii, 2, *The Fathers have eaten Sowre Grapes,*  
and

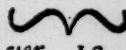
Serm. *and the Childrens Teeth are set on Edge:*  
 XVII. There was no man among the *Jews*, even  
 of the meanest capacity, but at first Hearing understood those words to mean, that *the Children were punished for the Transgression of their Fore-Fathers*. Thus when *St. Paul* tells us, that *Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap*, Gal. vi. 7: Every even the lowest Understanding immediately apprehends them to mean, that, according to mens behaviour Here, whether virtuous or vitious, so shall their Reward be, or their Punishment, hereafter. Again: When our Lord says, *Matt. vii, 16, Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*; his Sense is no less obvious, and his Words even more expressive, than if he had said directly, that Virtuous Actions cannot reasonably be expected to flow from Corrupt Principles, or from vitious and debauched Minds. The *Proverbial Expression* in my *Text*, being founded upon a Similitude less Common in our *Modern* language, than These before-mentioned; the Sense of it, for That reason, does not to an English Reader, at first Sight, appear so obvious. But with a little Attention to the general Nature of *Proverbial* Sayings, it is very easy to be understood. The Nature of a *Proverb* is, to contain in one single Sentence



tence a *Similitude*, or *Comparison* of *Two* Serm.  
*Things* with each other; and, under the XVII.  
*Instance* of some *one particular Example*,  
to conclude some *more general* or *Universal Truth*. This is evidently the Case,  
in the *Other Instances* I produced: And  
so it is likewise in *This Expression* in  
my *Text*. *Wheresoever the Body is,*  
*thither will the Eagles be gathered toge-*  
*ther. Wheresoever the Prey is, thither*  
*will the BIRDS of Prey flock towards*  
*it. Wheresoever the Case is the same,*  
*(whatsoever be the Subject spoken of;)*  
*there also the general Observation* upon  
the Case, *(whatsoever That Observation*  
*be,)* will have the *same Justness and*  
*Truth. Wheresoever the State of things*  
*is the same, and the Circumstances alike;*  
*there also will the Event, in Any Place,*  
or at *Any Time*, be proportionally a-  
like.

This is plainly the *Sense* of the words,  
as it arises from the Consideration of the  
*General nature* of a *Proverbial Expression*. And from the consideration of the  
*Particular connexion* of the words with  
those immediately foregoing, in *Each* of  
the Passages in the *Two Gospels* where  
the *same words* occur; it still more e-  
vidently appears to be the *True Sense* of  
them. In the 24th chapter of St. Mat-  
thew's

Serm. *thew's* Gospel, (and the same thing is re-  
 XVII. corded likewise in the 13<sup>th</sup> of *St. Mark*,  
 ~~~~~ and in the 21<sup>st</sup> of *St. Luke* ;) the disciples  
 ver. 3. had asked our Lord, *WHEN shall these*
things be? When shall all these things
come to pass, which thou hast so often
foretold to us? And What shall be the
Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of
the World? The Ground of their Que-
 sition was; that, upon the dissolution of
 the Jewish State and Government, which
 he had told them was approaching; they
 expected the *Kingdom of Christ* should
immediately be set up, in some remark-
 able manner, in some particular Place.
 In Answer to their Question, and in or-
 der to rectify this their mistake; our Lord
 tells them, that not only the City and
 Temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed,
 and the Jewish Nation dispersed; but
 that, after This, there should still succeed
 Mar. xiii. a long Train of Calamities, and the End
 7. should not be yet. For Jerusalem should
 Luke xxi. be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the
 24. Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And,
 during That long Period of time, in Other
 parts of the World likewise, Nation should
 Mat. xxiv. rise against Nation, and Kingdom against
 7. Kingdom; and there should be Famines
 and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers
 places. And that even all These calami-
 ties, comparatively speaking, should be
 but

but the *Beginnning of Sorrows*. For, a Sermon.
 Deluge of Corruption and *Iniquity* should XVII.
 overspread the World. And there should 
 be very great and very long *Persecutions*: ver. 12.
ver. 9, 10.
 And a time of *Tribulation*, such as had
 not been *since the beginning of the World*. ver. 21.
 And that, during This time, the *Gospel*
 should be preached in all the World,
 for a *Witness* unto all Nations. And ver. 14.
 his Conclusion of the Whole, is: That
 therefore his Disciples ought not to look
 for the *Kingdom of Christ*, as a Domini-
 on to be set up at any particular Time
 or Place: But in all times, and at all
 places alike, *wheresoever* and *whenssoever*
 the Doctrine of Christ is received and
 practised, *wheresoever* and *whenssoever* any
 number of sincere Believers (whether Ma-
 ny or Few) be gathered together in His
 Name, *There* (says he) is the Kingdom
 of Christ. Ver. 23, *If any man shall say*
unto you, Lo, Here is Christ, or There;
believe it not. For there shall arise False
Christs and False Prophets, and shall
shew great Signs and Wonders.-----Be-
 hold, I have told you before. Where-
 fore, if they shall say unto you, Behold,
 he is in the Desert, go not forth: Be-
 hold, he is in the secret chambers; believe
 it not. For as the Lightning cometh
 out of the East, and shineth even unto
 the West; so shall also the Coming of the
 Son

Serm. *Son of Man be. For wheresoever the*
 XVII. *Carcase is, there will the Eagles be ga-*
 ~~~~~ *thered together. The Sense evidently is*  
*This. As, in all Places equally, and at*  
*all Times, wheresoever the Lightning is,*  
*There does the Light of it shine forth;*  
*and wheresoever the Prey is, thither do*  
*the Birds of Prey resort: So, at what*  
*Time or Place soever the Doctrine of*  
*Christ is received, and practised according*  
*to His Directions, There is the Kingdom*  
*of Christ.*

In the *Other* passage, where the same words are *again* repeated, (which is, *Luke xvii, 37, the words of my Text;*) *there* likewise their *connexion* in the Thread of our Lord's Discourse, clearly shows them to have the *Like* signification. The Manner in which they are *There* introduced, is This. *Ver. 20; And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, WHEN the Kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said: The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation. Neither shall they say, Lo Here, or Lo There: For, behold, the Kingdom of God is Within (or Among) you. And he said unto his Disciples; The days will come, when-----they shall say unto you, See here, or see there; Go not after them, nor follow them. That is: Think not that*  
 the



the Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished under the character of any particular *Time* or *Place*, or to be known by any *External Notes* or *Marks*; But understand, that it is in *all Places* and at *all Times* the same; distinguished, *always* and *every where* alike, by its own *intrinsic essence* only; just as the Shining of *Lightning* is one and the same, from one end of Heaven to the other. After which he proceeds to warn them, *ver.* 26; that as, in the days of *Noah*, and in the days of *Lot*, men were negligent and secure, having their Thoughts entirely taken up with their present Business; their Ambition, their Covetousness, and their Pleasures; till, on a sudden, the *Deluge of Water* swept them all away in the *one* case; and *Lightning from Heaven*, joined with an *Earthquake*, destroyed and consumed them in the *other* case: *Even thus* (says he) *shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.* And then he concludes, in the words preceding my Text, *ver.* 34, *I tell you, in That Night there shall be two men in One Bed; the One shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the Field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. The Mean-*

- Serm. ing is: In the *righteous* and unerring  
 XVII. *Judgment of God* the Searcher of Hearts,  
 many persons shall finally be *distingui-*  
 shed from each other in the *Highest De-*  
 gree, between whom in all *Worldly Ap-*  
 pearance there was *No distinction*. And  
 ver. 37. they said unto him, *Where, Lord?* And  
 he said unto them, *Wheresoever the*  
*Body is, thither will the Eagles be ga-*  
*thered together.* That is to say: Your  
 Question is of No moment: 'Tis all one,  
*wheresoever* and *whenssoever* the same  
 thing comes to pass. Difference of Time  
 and Place, makes no difference at all in  
 God's account and estimation, either of  
 Things or Persons. Where-ever the  
*Case* is the same, and the *Circumstances*  
 alike; *there* also will the *Event* be pro-  
 portionably the *Same*. At what *Times*  
 and in what *Places* soever, the Persons  
 to be judged shall be found endued with  
 the like diversity of Qualifications; *there*  
 also shall the impartial and unerring Judg-  
 ment of God the Searcher of Hearts, di-  
 stinguish them with the like Distinction.
- Luke xxi. 36. *Watch ye therefore* (says our Lord) *and*  
*pray always, that ye may be accounted*  
*worthy to escape all these things that shall*  
*come to pass, and to stand before the Son*  
 Mark xiii. 37. *of Man.* And what I say unto You, I say  
 unto All; *Watch.*

Having



Having thus fully and at large explained the true Signification of the words of the Text: The Observations I shall draw from thence, are briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>, That, generally speaking, *All the Admonitions and Instructions* given by our Saviour to his *Disciples* at different Times and upon different Occasions, were intended by him to be applied (allowing for particular differences of Circumstances) to *All Christians* at *all times* and in *all places*. Concerning things recorded in the *Old Testament*, even from the *remotest* times, St. Paul declares, that *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for Our learning; that We, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope*, Rom. xv. 4. When the Scripture tells us, that *Abraham's Faith* was *imputed to him for Righteousness*, Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv. 22, *It was not written* (says the Apostle) *for His sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: That is, if We act with the same Fidelity upon the Principles of Our Profession, as He did upon His.*

Serm. On the other hand, when we find re-  
 XVII. corded in Scripture the severe *Punish-*  
 ~~~~~ *ments* inflicted upon the Children of *Is-*  
rael in the Wilderness, for their repeat-
 ed Acts of Disobedience; *All these*
things (says he) *happened unto Them for*
Examples, 1 Cor. x, 11; *and they are*
written for Our Admonition, upon whom
the Ends of the World are come. Now
 if This be so; much more may our Sa-
 viour's *Instructions* and *Admonitions* to
 his *Disciples*, be generally understood
 to be applicable, in proportion, to *All*
Christians. His *Prophetical Warnings*
 do all of them extend even unto the *End*
of the World: And his *Directions* to his
immediate Followers are usually couched
 under such Expressions, as were mani-
 festly intended for the Use and Instructi-
 on of all *intervening Ages*, until his co-
 ming to Judgment. *Where ever two or*
three (says he) *are gathered together in*
my Name, Matt. xviii. 20; *there am I*
in the midst of them. Wheresoever and
 whensoever the Doctrine of Christ is re-
 ceived, and practised according to his di-
 rections, in the love of Truth, Righteous-
 ness and Peace; be it in *one Place*, in one
Age of the world, or in *Another*; be it by
Many persons, or by *Few*: *There is the*
Church of Christ: To *Them* belong all
 the *glorious Promises*, which he has ever
 made

made to his *Church*; and to *Them* belong all the *Warnings* which he has given, of *Persecutions* to be expected from an unrighteous and corrupt World. For This reason, whoever at any time asked him *When* the Kingdom should be restored to *Israel*, or *When* the Kingdom of God should come; and *When* shall all these things come to pass; and *What* shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World? instead of mentioning any *particular time*, he constantly warned them to watch and to be ready at *all times*. And at the Conclusion of the Prophecy, whereof my Text is a part; he in express words declares, (as 'tis recorded by St. Mark, ch. xiii, 37,) *What I say unto You, I say unto ALL, Watch*. And at another time, when his Disciples directly asked him, whether he intended his Discourse in particular to *Them*, or in general to *All* men, Luke xii, 41; his Answer is to the very same Purpose. He had been exhorting them, ver. 35; *Let your loyns be girded about, and your Lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.-----Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.-----And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the Thief would come, he would have watched, and*

Serm.

XVII.

~v~

Serm. not have suffered his house to be broken
 XVII. through. Be YE therefore ready also;
 ~~~~~ for the Son of man cometh at an hour  
 when ye think not. Then Peter said un-  
 to him, Lord, speakest thou this Parable  
 unto Us, or even to All? And the Lord  
 said, Who then is that faithful and wise  
 Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ru-  
 ler over his Household, to give them their  
 portion of Meat in due Season? Blessed  
 is That Servant, whosoever he be, whom  
 his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so do-  
 ing.

2dly, A Second Observation arising from  
 what our Lord declares in the Text, is;  
 that the Salvation of Men does not de-  
 pend upon Any Differences of *External*  
 Circumstances in the present Life, but  
 intirely upon the *Inward* Qualifications  
 of their Minds, and upon their Behavi-  
 our under the Circumstances wherein the  
 Providence of God has placed them, *what-*  
*soever* those Circumstances be. I tell  
 you, says he, in *That Night* there shall  
 be two men in One Bed; the One shall  
 be taken, and the Other left. And when  
 the Disciples asked him, *Where, Lord?*  
 he answers in the Text, under a known  
*Proverbial* Expression; *Where ever* the  
*Case* is alike, the *Event* will be the  
*Same*; *Wheresoever* the Body is, *thither*  
*will*



*will the Eagles be gathered together.* Sermon.  
 Not only to those who shall be living at XVII.  
 the Time and Place of our Lord's coming  
 to Judgment, but to All Others likewise,  
 at all Times and in all Places, shall This  
 declaration of His be verified: *Two men*  
*shall be in One Bed; the One shall be ta-*  
*ken, and the Other left:* By no visible or  
*appearing* differences of worldly Circum-  
 stances, but merely according to their in-  
 ward moral Qualifications, shall men fi-  
 nally be distinguished. Not to Those in  
*particular*, who shall be found alive at  
 our Lord's Second Coming, does he say,  
*Blessed is That Servant whom his Lord,*  
*when he cometh, shall find so doing:*  
 But his Meaning is, to *All in general*, in  
 all Times and Places; *Blessed is that Ser-*  
*vant whom his Lord, when he cometh,*  
*shall find to have so done.* Thus when  
 the Prophet Daniel says, *ch. xii, 12,*  
*Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh*  
*to-----the time of the End:* The Mean-  
 ing is not, *Blessed is he* that shall happen  
 to live at the time of the end; but, *Bles-*  
*sed is he* who by *Waiting*, that is, by  
*patient continuance in Well-doing*, by Rom. ii. 7.  
 being constantly upon his Guard against  
 the Temptations of an unrighteous and  
 corrupt World, by *Keeping Himself* (as  
 St. John expresses it) so that *That Wick-*  
*ed One toucheth him not;* blessed is He <sup>1 Joh. v.</sup>  
 who <sup>18.</sup>

Serm. who by thus *Waiting*, shall be found  
 XVII. *worthy to attain That life* which shall  
 be revealed at the *End of the days*, and  
 to *stand before the Son of Man*. Many  
 are very apt to imagine, if they had lived  
 in some *Other Place* or *Age* of the  
 World, if they had been placed under  
 some *Other Circumstances* than they *Are*,  
 if they had lived in *Our Saviour's days*,  
 and at a time when *one rose from the dead*;  
 the Principles of religion would have had  
 a very different Effect upon them, from  
 what they *Now* have. But all This is a  
 very great Fallacy: And Experience has  
 shown, that not upon Differences of *Time*  
 and *Place*, but upon the *Moral Disposition*  
 of men's *Hearts and Minds*, does the *In-*  
*fluence of religion* entirely depend. The  
*Jews in the Wilderness* were not at all re-  
 formed, even by the *Sight* of numerous  
*Miracles*. And the Pharisees in *our Sa-*  
*viour's time*, who said, *If we had been in*  
*the days of our Fathers, we would not*  
*have been partakers with them in the Blood*  
*of the Prophets*; did yet, by their *Deeds*,  
 show themselves to be the *Genuine Sons*,  
 and *Inheritours of the Temper*, of those  
 who killed the Prophets.

Luke xvi.  
 31.

3dly and *Lastly*. The *Last* Observation  
 I shall draw from this Discourse of our  
 Saviour, of which my Text is the Conclu-  
 sion;



sion; is, that all the *Marks* or *Notes*, which Those of the Church of *Rome* pretend to give us, of the *True Church* of God; are such as our Lord here warns his Disciples not to be deceived by. *Christ*, they tell us, is no where to be found but among *Them*: And the Doctrines and Benefits of the Gospel, can no other way possibly be conveyed to Mankind, than through the particular *Channel* of *Rome*. What is This, but the very thing our Lord here admonishes us to beware of? *If any man shall say unto you, Lo, Here is Christ, or There; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets.-----* *Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the Desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret Chambers; believe it not. For as, where-ever the Body is, thither will be Eagles be gathered together; And as, where ever the Lightning is, there will the Shining of it be the Same, from the one part under Heaven, even unto the Other: So also is the Light of the everlasting Gospel, and of the Scripture of Truth.*

Serm.  
XVII.

Matt.  
xxiv, 23--  
— 28.

Luke xvii,  
24, 37.

Thus again: Pretended *Miracles*, in order to establish their *New Doctrines*, and introduce *New Practices*; What are these, but accomplishments of That prediction of our Lord; *There shall arise False*

Serm. *False Christs and False Prophets, and shall*  
 XVII. *show great Signs and Wonders, insomuch*  
 Matt. *that (if it were possible) they shall deceive*  
 xxiv. 24. *the very Elect !*

Again: *Visibility, or Worldly Pomp, Grandeur and Authority, which they make to be Another Note or Mark of the True Church of God; is directly the Reverse of what our Saviour declared to His Disciples. They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my Name's Sake. And, because iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. And, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?*

ver. 9, 12.

Luk. xviii. 8.

*Marks therefore or Notes of the True Church of Christ, in the nature of things, there can be None, but That One essential one, which makes it to be the True Church; viz. the Profession and Practice of the Truth; the Profession and Practice of That Doctrine, which our Lord himself taught, and which his Apostles preached and delivered down in Writing to all succeeding generations. With This; where ever Two or Three are gathered together in the name of Christ, There is Christ in the midst of them; that is to say, There is the true Church of God. Without This; how*

Matt. xviii, 20.



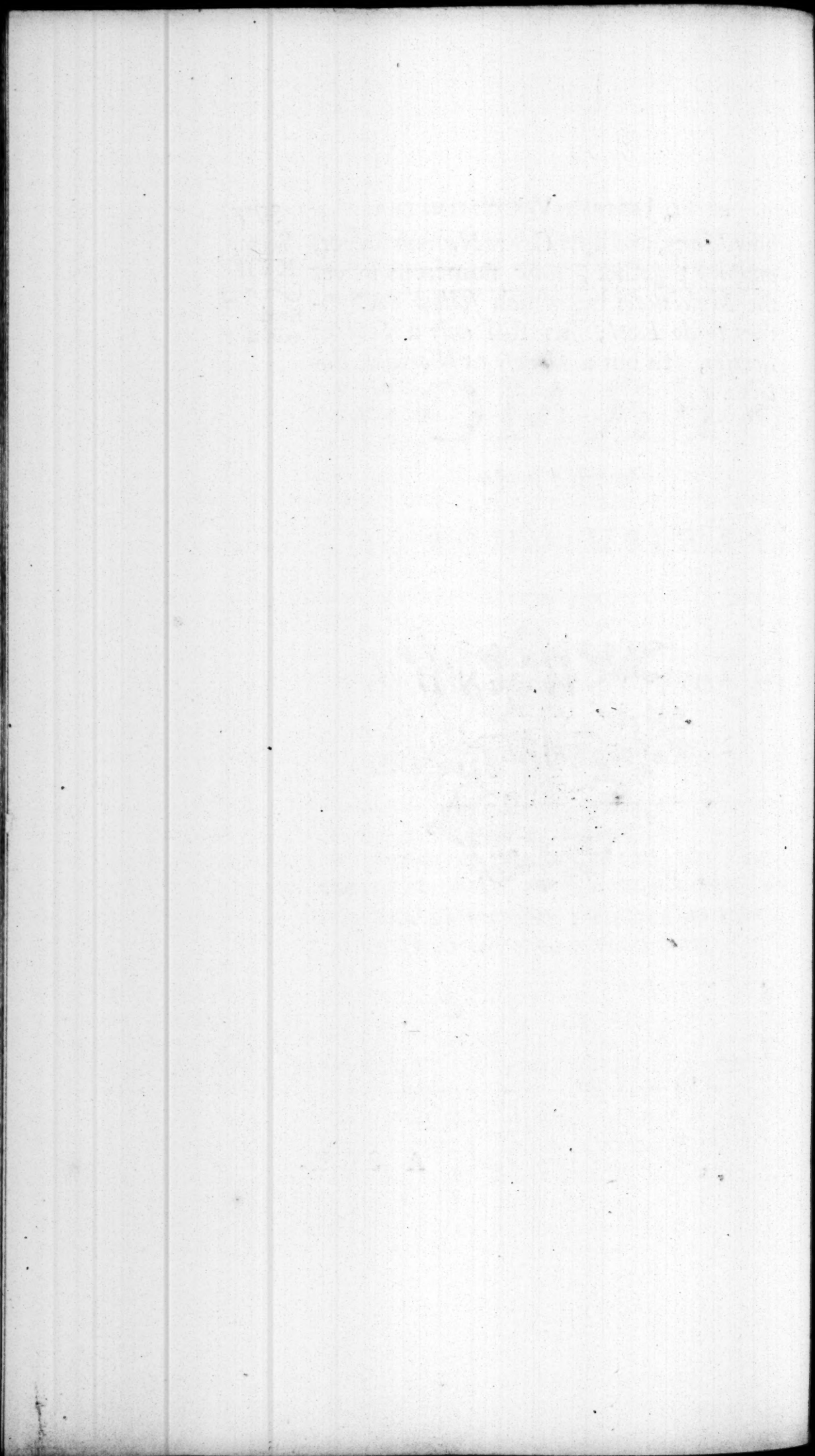
at St. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

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how *Many*, and how *Great Nations* soever, Serm.  
*conspire* together; how numerous soever **XVII.**  
the *Multitudes* be, which *follow* each o-  
ther *to do Evil*; 'tis still *only* a *Seēt* or Exod. xxiii. 2.  
*Schism*, 'tis but a *Heresy* or *Worldly Fa-*  
*ction*.



A SER-





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A  
**SERMON**  
 Preach'd in the  
 PARISH-CHURCH  
 OF

*St James's Westminster,*

On Sunday, April 18, 1725.

---

MATT. V. 16.

*Let your Light so shine before men, that  
 they may see your good works, and glo-  
 rify your Father which is in Heaven.*

**L**IGHT, in the first and natural Serm.  
 Sense of the word, is That which XVIII.  
 causes all things to be Seen as they  
 Are, in their True Nature, and in their  
 Proper Colours. 'Tis That which disco-  
 vers every Secret, which removes every  
 Uncertainty, which detects every Deformity,

Serm. mity, and opens to us in all their Glory  
 XVIII. the innumerable and inimitable *Beauties*  
 of Nature. Hence in the *Figurative*  
*Sense*, whatsoever enables us to discover  
 any *Truth*, we usually speak of as gi-  
 ving us *Light* in That matter: For, as  
 the Apostle expresses it, *Eph. v, 13*; *what-*  
*soever doth make manifest, is Light*. And  
 because some things, the more they are in-  
 lightned, the more *Beautiful* they appear;  
 whereas Other things love to have their  
*Deformities* concealed in *Darkness*: hence  
 in the *Moral Sense* also, whatever Actions  
 or Persons are truly *virtuous* and *praise-*  
*worthy*, and consequently always the more  
*valuable* in proportion, as they are more  
 perfectly and thoroughly *known*; are fre-  
 quently in Scripture styled by the name  
 of *Light*, and the *contrary ones* by that of  
*Darkness*. Concerning *God himself*, upon  
 account of the infinite Purity and Holiness  
 of his Nature, the Apostle thus speaks;  
*1 Job. i, 5*; *God is LIGHT, and in Him*  
*is no Darkness at all*. And to good Men  
 likewise, in *their* proportion, is the same  
 manner of speaking applied; *Eph. v, 8*;  
*Ye were sometimes Darkness, but Now are*  
*ye LIGHT in the Lord: Walk, as chil-*  
*dren of Light:-----And have no fellow-*  
*ship with the unfruitful Works of Dark-*  
*ness, but rather reprove them.*

Again;



Again; Because all Luminous Bodies, in proportion to the degree of their *own* Brightness, necessarily diffuse their Light around them, and at a Distance inlighten all *Other* Bodies; hence, in the *religious* sense, a *Good Example* is a *Light* shining in darkness; spreading its influence every way; diffusing Instruction, Knowledge, Incouragement to Virtue, and Motives to reformation of Manners, in the midst of a dissolute and corrupt World. In *This sense* the word is used by St. Paul, *Phil.* ii, 15; *That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as LIGHTS in the World.* And in *This sense* 'tis used by our Saviour in the Text; *Let your LIGHT so shine before men. Ye are, (saith he in the words immediately foregoing, Ye are) the LIGHT of the World:* As therefore a City that is set on an hill, cannot be hid; and as men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth Light unto all that are in the House; Even so, saith he, let YOUR LIGHT shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven: Let your whole Behaviour be so exemplary, and the Influence of your religion upon  
your

Serm. your own *Lives* so conspicuous to the  
 XVIII. World; that men being thereby convin-  
 ~~~~~ ced of the *Excellency* of your doctrine,  
 may by your Preaching be led from Er-
 rour to Truth, and be converted by your
 Example from Wickedness to Virtue.

'Tis well worth observing here, by the way, that This expression of our Saviour, concerning men's *lighting a candle*, and putting it, not under a Bushel, but on a *Candlestick*, so that *it giveth Light unto all that are in the House*; is the Foundation of that lively and beautiful Image in St. *John's* Vision, where the seven primitive Churches of *Asia* are represented under the similitude of *seven golden Candlesticks*; and the principal or most eminent persons in those several Churches, as so many *Stars* or *Lights* in those *Candlesticks*, giving Light to the *Whole Temple* or *Catholick Church* of God.

And This concerning the *nature* of that *figurative* expression, *Let your LIGHT so shine before men.*

The following words, *that men may see your good works, and GLORIFY your Father which is in Heaven*, are of very plain and obvious Meaning: That by the *Spreading* of your *Doctrine*, and by the
Influence



Influence of your Example, the Practise of true Religion and Goodness may prevail in the World: That men may see the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and the infinite Benefit that would arise to mankind from the universal Prevalency of true Religion: That they may be convinced of the necessity of reforming their Manners, and of living under a constant Sense of God upon their Minds, in expectation of a righteous judgment to come. The Practise of Virtue upon These Principles, is the Establishment of the Kingdom of God among Men. And in the Inlargement of this Kingdom of Righteousness and Holiness, in the Increase of the Efficacy of Truth and Virtue, which is the Proper Subjection of Rational and Free Agents; in This consists the Glory of God upon Earth. Thus the Conversion of Unbelievers, which St. Paul describes by their being convinced, and falling down on their Faces and worshipping God, 1 Cor. xiv, 24; St. Peter expresses by the same Phrase with This in the Text, of glorifying God: 1 Pet. ii. 12, Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, GLORIFY GOD in the day of Visitation. And St. John, in his Revelation, uses the expression of

Serm. mens giving *Glory to God*, and *repenting*
 XVIII. *of their evil deeds*, as words having one
 and the same signification; *Ch. ix. 20;*
xvi, 9; The rest of the men, which were
not killed by these plagues, yet REPENTED
NOT of ——— their Murders, nor of their
Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of
their Thefts; but ——— blasphemed the
Name of God, who hath power over these
Plagues; and they REPENTED NOT, to
give him GLORY.

Glorifying of God therefore, and *promoting Righteousness and Truth among Men*, being in effect one and the same thing: from hence appears the *Reason* and the *Consistency* of our Lord's commanding his Disciples in the Text, to *let their Light shine before men*; and yet exhorting them, in another part of the very same Discourse, *ch. vi, 1, Take heed that ye do NOT your Alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven: And, When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of Men: Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward. The Reason (I say) and the Consistency of Both these Exhortations*, appears from the *peculiar Considerations* annexed to
each

each exhortation respectively. The Same Serm. XVIII.
 thing, in *different* Circumstances, is *not* the Same thing. A *Particular* good *Action*, done with a *Particular View* of *vain-glory* and *popular Applause*; ceases to be a religious *Action*, and falls short of its Reward. The Same *Action* performed with *such* a *View*, and in *such* a manner, as to have a direct and proper *Tendency* to *promote* and *encourage* the universal *Practice of Virtue* in the World; is, in the most *immediate* and *real sense* of the words, a *glorifying of our Father which is in Heaven*; 'Tis causing men (as much as in Us lies,) to make acknowledgement of *God*, and to order their Lives as being under a perpetual sense of his *Inspection* and *Government*.

Every Act of Any Virtue whatsoever, has a natural *Tendency* to *This End*; and in *general*, by *habitual* good Living, is the *Glory of God*, in *This sense* of the phrase, most highly advanced. But *Some Virtues in particular*, have a more *conspicuous Influence* towards *This End*, than Others. And since in That passage which I now referred to, of the *same Sermon* of our Lord upon the Mount; 'tis agreed on all hands, that What, in the best Copies of the Original, is, *Take heed that ye do not your RIGHTEOUSNESS before men*, Matt. vi. 1.

C c 2

mean s

Serm. means undoubtedly, and is accordingly
 XVIII. *rendered in Our Translation, Take heed*
 ~~~~~ *that ye do not your ALMS before men: 'tis*  
*very probable that here in my Text like-*  
*wise, our Lord, under the general terms,*  
*Light and Good Works, might have a par-*  
*ticular regard to Works of Beneficence*  
*and Charity: Commanding his disciples*  
*to make conspicuous their Practice of the*  
*same Virtue, when their so doing might be*  
*an Honour to Religion; which, in other*  
*circumstances, he commands them to keep*  
*private, when its being publick would*  
*serve only the Purposes of Vain-glory.*

And indeed there is no one Christian  
 virtue, to the Practice of which there are  
 in Scripture given more *earnest Exhorta-*  
*tions, or more large and repeated Promi-*  
*ses, than to This of Charity. Cast thy*  
*Bread upon the Waters; for thou shalt*  
*find it after many days, Eccles. xi, 1. If*  
*thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and*  
*bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house:*  
*If when thou seest the naked, thou cover*  
*him; and bide not thy self from thine own*  
*flesh: Then shall thy Light break forth---*  
*in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the*  
*noon-day, Is. lviii, 7-----10. In like man-*  
*ner, in the New Testament, our Lord ex-*  
*horts: When thou makest a Feast, call the*  
*poor, the maimed, the lame, the Blind:*  
*And*



*And then thou shalt be blessed; For they cannot recompence thee; for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the Just,* Luke xiv; 13, 14. And in his description of the last judgment, he expresses the sentence of the Blessed thus; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat,* &c. Matt. xxv. 34. And in his discourse to the Pharisees, *Luke xi. 41, Give Alms,* says he, *of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you.* His meaning is; not that *Charity*, or *Any* other Virtue, will compensate for *vitious* and *immoral* Practices; but that *These* Virtues are *really* acceptable before God, in whose sight the Pharisaical ceremonious Purifications were of no Esteem.

It must and ought here to be acknowledged, to the Honour of the Present Generation, that there appears to be *at This time* among us a number of persons so charitably disposed, and so ready to make a good Use of the Plenty wherewith the Providence of God has blessed them; that, were it possible they could be absolutely certain, their charity should always be *expended* in such ways, and applied to such purposes only, for which it was designed;

Serm. so as neither to become in any degree an  
 XVIII. encouragement to *Idleness*, nor a support  
 of any *Party*, nor an occasion of *Pride*,  
 or of raising persons *Above* those Circum-  
 stances in which they might be imployed  
 most usefully to the Publick: it cannot  
 at all be doubted, but the Supply would  
 immediately be *more* than is requisite, to  
 relieve the truly indigent, and to answer  
 the wants of All who were really unable  
 to provide for the necessities of Life by  
 Honest Labour. But indeed, hardly any  
 thing is more difficult, in an idle and cor-  
 rupt Age, than for those who have the  
 strongest *Inclinations* as well as the greatest  
*Abilities* of doing Acts of Beneficence, to  
 find out in *what manner*, and upon *what*  
*Objects* in particular, they may best bestow  
 their charitable good Offices; so as that the  
 Use and Benefit of them may be the *most*  
 extensive, and the *least* liable to misappli-  
 cation or Abuse. Nor is it possible in  
 This case, to lay down any certain and  
 determinate *Rules*. Every person, as he  
 must of necessity be left to the determi-  
 nation of his own prudence, at *what* par-  
 ticular *Times* and *Places*, and in *what pro-*  
*portions* he will choose to bestow his Cha-  
 rity; so must he also in judging about the  
*Manner* of disposing it, and upon *what*  
*Objects*, and with *what particular Views*.  
 he will principally direct it; that it may  
 more



more immediately answer the *intention* of the Giver, and may be *most* conducive to the *particular Purposes* he is chiefly desirous to promote. According to the *different* Stations of life men have been employed in, and the *different* Scenes of humane affairs they have seen in the World; they are apt naturally in consequence to frame to themselves very different notions, what *Kinds* of charities will in the whole be most useful to the Publick, and most likely to answer the general Intention with Success. In *every* Method that *has* or *can be* proposed, when considered under *different Views and Regards*, it cannot be otherwise, but that *Each one* will be found liable in *Some Respects* to more Objections than others, and in *Some* to fewer. *Whatever* Way be taken, and *whatever* care and circumspection men use, in the disposal of their Charity; it will always be possible, that the End they propose to themselves shall not be fully answered; And in *no way* can there be any certain and absolute security, that every sort of miscarriage shall be prevented. That which of all other methods seems, upon the whole, to have the *Advantage* in *most respects*; as being most *extensive* in its *Influence*, and *lasting* in its *Effects*; subject to the *Fewest Inconveniences*, and *those* from time to time the

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Serm. most easily remedied; is the *Education of*  
 XVIII. *Poor Children.* Which, when put in a  
 right method, and directed in a right  
 and proper manner; is in effect a Com-  
 pendium of almost every sort and kind  
 of Charity, of almost all the several  
 and most different Instances of Benefi-  
 cence in One. 'Tis, at the same time,  
 both Feeding the Hungry, and cloathing  
 the Naked with a Garment. 'Tis in-  
 structing the Ignorant in the first princi-  
 ples of Religion, and promoting a general  
 Sense and Knowledge of God in the  
 World. 'Tis sowing early the Seeds of  
 Virtue and good Manners, and preventing  
 the first Beginnings of those vitious Ha-  
 bits, which, when they have taken root  
 by Custom and long Practice, seldom Any  
 Zeal for reformation of Manners is ever  
 after able to correct. 'Tis, when joined  
 with putting them upon works of *Labour*  
 and *Industry*, as it ought always to be;  
 'tis then (I say) a remedy against all the  
 ill Effects of Idleness and Poverty, and  
 and (by a *Double* Benefit) making Those  
 to become Useful Members of the Publick,  
 who would otherwise have been a Burden  
 and a Weight upon it. In a word, 'tis  
 at once relieving the necessities of the  
 Present Generation, and (as far as Hu-  
 mane Care and Foresight can extend,)  
 preventing the Wants of Those which are  
 to



to come. To *This sort* of Charity there-  
fore, (whenever there is *reasonable* Ground  
to hope it will be duly applied to the  
Purposes now mentioned,) we are exhor-  
ted by *All* those arguments *in conjunction*,  
which *singly* incite us to be beneficent in  
Any of the Particular Instances. To this  
we are invited by all the considerations of  
Publick Benefit, and by all the Motives  
and Arguments of Religion. To This  
we are encouraged by the united Force  
of all those Promises *at once*, which in  
Scripture are made, on many *different* oc-  
casions, to the *several* methods of showing  
mercy and charity.

It has upon some occasions been obser-  
ved, and perhaps not always wholly with-  
out reason; that the children of the *Mean-  
est* parents, sustained, educated, and instru-  
cted merely upon the Charity of Others;  
have sometimes in consequence of these  
Advantages, and upon account of This  
very instruction, been tempted to become  
*conceited* and *vain*, and *Above* being im-  
ployed in those *Meaner Services*, which  
are of all others the *most necessary*, and at  
the same time the *most useful* to the Pub-  
lick: And sometimes that they have be-  
come liable to be led away into *Factions*,  
which, being frequently founded upon  
Pretences of Religion, do find very great  
Support from whatever is capable of be-  
ing

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Serm. ing changed into the *Ceremonies* and *For-*  
 XVIII. *malities of Superstition.* In order to re-  
 medy, as far as possible, these Inconvi-  
 cies, and to turn Objects of Charity into  
 useful Members of the Publick ; to in-  
 struct them in the plainest Principles of  
 Sobriety and Virtue ; and to inure  
 them to Labour and Industry, which  
 is the Great Support of every Nation ; It  
 has been resolv'd that the poor Children  
 to be supported by *your* Charity, shall for  
 the future (and the Design is already be-  
 gun actually to be put in execution) be  
 employed the greatest part of their time  
 in such *Kinds of Work*, as may qualify  
 them for the *lower and most necessary Ser-*  
*vices* of Life. And to This End provi-  
 sion has been made, that they shall *not*  
*only* be *cloath'd* and *taught* as formerly,  
 but that they shall be furnished moreover  
 with *Food* and *Lodging* ; that, being con-  
 stantly kept together in a Place of *Work*  
 and Imployment, the propos'd Intention  
 may be more effectually answer'd ; and  
 the Inconviencies, which it has perhaps  
 not unjustly been apprehended would fol-  
 low upon their being rais'd *Above* their  
 proper Station, we may reasonably *hope*,  
 will in great measure be prevented.

One evident and very obvious good ef-  
 fect of This Method, is ; that whereas,  
 when



when children have only been *Taught* in Schools, it too often happens that by returning constantly home to their Parents or Relations, the Principles of Religion and good Manners wherein they have been instructed, have from time to time been as it were *extinguished* by the influence of *ill Examples*, and over-powered by the continual Sight of *vicious Practices*; they will Now, as far as possible, be kept out of that danger of being led away by ill Example; and, in a good degree, out of the reach of the contagion, of the most profligate and dissolute part of the World. For Vice is not *natural* to mankind, but taught by ill Education and corrupt Examples, confirmed by Custom and Habit, and Then indeed very hard to be rooted out by the Strongest Arguments or by the Wisest Instructions. For, that which has long been *crooked*, will not easily be *made streight*; and that which is wanting, cannot be numbred, Eccl. i, 15. But if young persons can *from the Beginning* be kept out of ill Company, and be taught only the *plain* Principles of Religion and Virtue, and be inured to *Industry* and moderate *Labour*; they will easily be formed to *Habits* of Sobriety and Modesty, to a sense of the reasonableness of virtuous Living, and to a Hatred of those vicious and debauched Practices, which bring so great

Serm. great a part of Mankind *visibly* to *Temporal*, and too certainly to *Eternal* Destruction.

And whereas *Poor Orphans particularly*, who are left wholly destitute of Friends and Relations, are apt to be exposed not only to the Disadvantages of ignorance and want of instruction, and to the seducements of ill Company in the worst and lowest part of a loose and degenerate World, but very frequently also to lie under the greatest *Temporal* Wants, and be subject to such a variety of *Hardships* and *Oppressions*, as often render them almost *incapable* of Any useful Employment in the World; By the Method now proposed, *These Objects* in particular, as they will probably be more *Willing than Others* to *submit* to such a manner of Education as may best fit them for the *meanest* and most necessary *Services*, so *These* ('tis likely) will be the *principal* and *most numerous* Sharers in your present Beneficence. Which is one not inconsiderable additional recommendation of the design of turning Charity into this particular Channel.

The Provision *now* made for accommodating the poor children with *Food* and *Lodging*, who *before* were only *Cloath-*  
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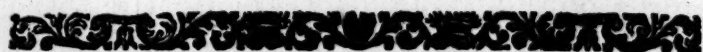


ed and Taught; must indeed of necessity cause a considerable *Increase* of the Annual *Expense*. But if there be good reason to *hope*, (as there plainly is in the Nature of the Thing,) that the *Accession* of *Usefulness* to the *Charity* by this method, will in proportion be greater than the *Increase* of the *Expense*; this is a very just argument to prevail with well-disposed persons, to inlarge their contributions. *Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful Giver.---As it is written; he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever.---Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth thro' Us Thanksgiving to God. For the administration of This Service, not only supplieth the Wants of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God: Whilst by the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed Subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal Distribution unto Them, and unto all Men.*

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2Cor. ix,7

F I N I S.



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